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ABSTRACT

This guide was developed to help concerned community members, groups, and organizations learn about major federal and state funds for employment-related youth programs and to direct them to additional funding resources. The guide discusses several types of employment-related activities that help young people become healthy and productive adults. The guide is divided into four sections. The first, "Effective Youth Employment Programs," provides information on the types of services that community groups should aim for as they help young people prepare for good jobs. This section describes youth development and the skills and abilities young people need to move from adolescence to adulthood. The second section, "The Workforce Investment Act" (WIA) describes the legislation that governs the U.S. Department of Labor's job training funds through state and local agencies that plan systems and administer the funds, including funds for employment-related youth programs. Section 3 describes "Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)," the program that provides public welfare assistance and can fund services and programs for eligible youth to reduce dependence on government assistance, prevent or reduce single-mother pregnancies, and encourage the formation of two-parent families. The final section deals with "State Education Assistance," which pays for alternative learning programs. Additional resources are described throughout the guide and are listed at the end with contact information. The guide also offers profiles of quality youth programs funded by these sources of funds and adaptable tools, including charts and questions, that can help community groups plan strategies, assess programs, influence policy, and take advantage of funding opportunity. (SLD)

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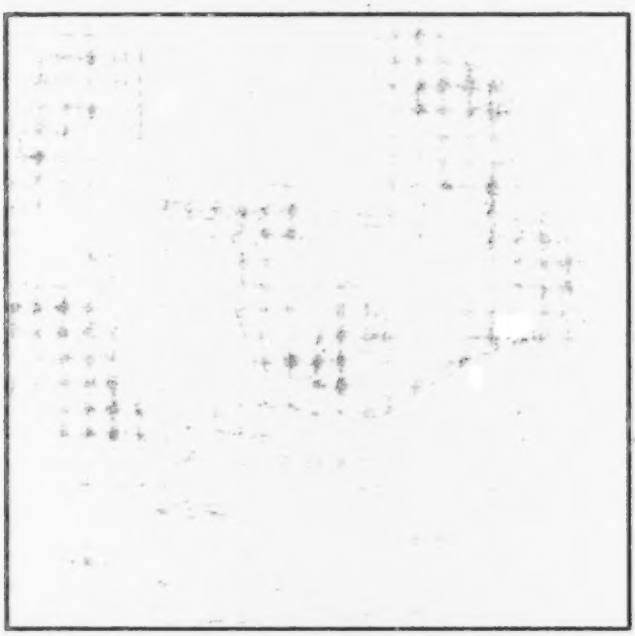

# Supporting Youth Employment

## A Guide for Community Groups

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Carol Clymer
Keisha Edwards
Joseph Ponce
Laura Wyckoff

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# Supporting Youth Employment

## A Guide for Community Groups


Carol Clymer
Keisha Edwards
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## ABOUT THE *GUIDE*

### Why the *Guide* was developed

Nationwide, 15 million people between the ages of 16 and 24 are not prepared for high-wage employment. Inadequate education or training is a major reason. In the latest compiled information on education and future income, a 1998 Bureau of Census report indicates that, on average, dropouts 25 years or older earn a little over $16,000 a year; those who finish high school earn $23,600; those with an associates degree earn $32,500. College graduates are paid nearly $44,000, almost three times what those who do not finish high school can expect to earn. It is remarkable what a good education can mean in real income over a working lifetime. What it can mean for any individual's personal fulfillment can only be surmised.

Many of these young people face genuine obstacles—they live in low-income communities with higher-than-average rates of teen pregnancy, substance abuse and criminal activity. They have attended schools that offer poorly taught courses irrelevant to their needs or the needs of future employers. They may have few community, family or peer models for continuing in school; they may be minorities in a nation where the majority population has historically known more opportunity.

During the past three decades, federal, state and local funds have been available to support services for vulnerable youth. In the last few years, many of these resources have become more flexible in order to meet the special needs of those in the most precarious situations—non-English speakers, homeless young people, gang-affected youth, and young people with physical and mental disabilities. Why then are many young people still not acquiring the education, skills and credentials necessary to get higher-paying jobs? One answer could be that these funds have not always been effectively used. Quite possibly, funding sources and their options are either unknown or ignored by educators, parents and community members—or not accessed by community-based organizations, perhaps because of burdensome guidelines, restrictions and reporting requirements. And perhaps because, all too often, many programs with a history of using these funds try to hold on to them even though they do not effectively serve their young participants.

One solution could lie in the determination of local communities to learn about these resources, insist that they be used effectively or use ingenuity to put the funding to good use themselves. After all, the community is where these young people live, and the community stands to benefit when its young people are prepared to become productive adults working in jobs that offer personal satisfaction, benefits and decent wages.

**What's special about this *Guide***

**It's for community members, groups and organizations.** *Supporting Youth Employment: A Guide for Community Groups* was developed to help concerned community members, groups and organizations learn about major federal and state funds for employment-related youth programs and direct them to additional, related resources.

**It discusses several types of employment-related activities that help young people become healthy and productive adults.** Vast amounts of material are available on ways that youth make successful transitions to adulthood. The term "youth development" is used to describe this process and could include sports and recreation opportunities, trust building, risk-taking experiences and the building of peer relationships. Undoubtedly, many programs facilitate the successful, future employment of their young participants through such activities. However "youth development," as used in this *Guide*, describes effective program elements that help prepare young people, especially vulnerable young people, for good jobs and potentially satisfying careers.

**The purpose of the *Guide***

The purpose of *Supporting Youth Employment* is to help community groups:

- Know what effective youth employment programs do and how to assess existing systems and programs;
- Learn about three sources of funding available for youth employment programs, who controls the funds and how well the funds are spent;
- Advocate for public funding for effective services in local communities where needed; and
- Involve youth in planning and implementing the programs meant for them.

**What the *Guide* contains**

*Supporting Youth Employment* is divided into four sections:

**Section I: Effective Youth Employment Programs** provides information on the types of services that community groups should aim for as they help young people prepare for good jobs. This section describes youth development and the skills and abilities that young people must gain in order to move successfully from adolescence to adulthood. Along with examples of effective, employment-related programs, it refers the reader to additional resources to assess and improve current programs or plan and implement new ones.

The next three sections offer information on public funding sources to support employment-related services for youth. After a brief description of each, the *Guide* explains the requirements and suggests how community groups can connect with decision-makers, agencies administering the funds and the programs using them. It also outlines the challenges of accessing the funds.



**Section II: The Workforce Investment Act (WIA)** governs the U.S. Department of Labor's job training funds through state and local agencies that plan systems and administer the funds, including funds for employment-related youth programs.

**Section III: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)** provides public welfare assistance, but can fund services and programs for eligible youth to reduce dependency on government assistance, prevent or reduce single-mother pregnancies, or encourage the formation of two-parent families—all issues related to personal and family income.

**Section IV: State Education Assistance** pays for what many consider "an education"—kindergarten through twelfth-grade schooling. Although ADA (Average Daily Attendance) monies must help pay for all aspects of public education from learning the alphabet to understanding the Bill of Rights, some states and school districts spend ADA funds for special programs and alternative education. These funds can help young people stay in school and prepare them for jobs and careers.

**Additional Resources** are provided throughout the *Guide* and listed at the end with contact information, including websites for organizations and programs.

The *Guide* also offers:

- Highlights that profile quality youth programs funded through WIA, TANF and/or ADA; and
- Adaptable tools, including charts, step-by-step actions and questions that can help community groups plan strategies, assess programs, influence policy and take advantage of funding opportunities.

**The audiences for this *Guide* and how they might use it**

*Supporting Youth Employment: A Guide for Community Groups* is for those who care about the future of young people in their communities and want to increase their chances of successful employment.

Individuals and groups who will find this *Guide* helpful include:

- **Community members, advocacy groups and faith-based organizations** that seek information on how quality youth programs are structured, what they offer and how current programs could be improved;
- **Community organizing groups** that know that youth are not getting the education, training and support that lead to jobs paying decent wages, and want to do something about it;
- **Community-based organizations** that may have limited information about WIA, TANF and/or ADA or know about these resources but have been reluctant to compete for them;
- **Community economic development groups** that are interested in building a skilled workforce and effective programs for young people;
- **Employers** who want to know how funding, systems and programs can help prepare potential employees for the workforce;
- **Workforce Investment Boards and Youth Council members** who are working to build an effective youth program for their communities, and need information on effective youth employment programs and opportunities available through TANF and ADA funding;
- **School administrators** who are knowledgeable about school funding, but want information about other funding and how these funds might be used to support services for students; and
- **Young people,** themselves, who want to know about resources that could support their education and employment.



Armed with information, community groups can better support their youth. They can pursue change when necessary to ensure that young people receive effective services. *Supporting Youth Employment* is a guide to help groups begin. What is needed to make this information truly useful is the energy, innovative ideas and dedication of community groups—groups that want to build vital, healthy communities where young people are prepared for successful employment, satisfying careers and better futures.

# *Effective Youth Employment Programs*

## *The Big Picture*

There are employment-related programs for youth and then there are *effective*, employment-related programs. To ensure that young people are prepared for good jobs and satisfying careers, effective, quality programs should be a goal for community groups.

What makes an effective, quality program? Does "quality" mean offering career classes in middle school, preparation for the "new" General Education Development (GED) test or summer jobs to low-income youth? How about the opportunity to learn applied mathematics or computer skills? Or receive information on getting to work on time, appropriately dressed and ready to deliver exemplary customer service? Help with college applications? Tutoring? Transportation to job sites? And, does "effective" mean employment programs tailored to specific groups of young people, such as non-English speakers or teenage fathers?

Quality programs might offer any or all of these services, but so do ineffective programs. (Don't make the mistake of accepting that effectiveness is achieved by enrolling and graduating the number of young people specified in a funding contract.) Truly effective youth employment programs help young people develop their own capacity to manage the responsibilities of adult life, including making a good living for themselves and their families. What allows programs to effectively help young people is the approach that administrators and staff take and the principles that they follow to provide services, activities and supports for youth.

This section of the *Guide* contains information about programs based on the principles of positive ways to support youth. It highlights program models, provides a tool to involve young people in improving youth programs and a tool for gathering and analyzing information on services currently available—or missing—in communities like your own.





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## *Youth Development*

The idea that youth can successfully move through adolescence by developing a series of interconnected skills and abilities is the fundamental premise underlying youth development. These skills and abilities include:

- Social and interpersonal skills;
- Thinking, reasoning and basic academic skills;
- Capacity to understand, appreciate and plan for the future;
- Ability to take on responsibilities; and
- Integration of vocational knowledge and career interests.

Youth development programs should not focus solely on remediating deficiencies or solving the perceived problems of young people, such as preventing teen pregnancy. Instead, the experiences and activities that programs offer should help young people gain the skills and inner resources necessary to solve their own problems and make decisions that result in healthy and fulfilling lives.

What does a program—or a whole school—based on principles of youth development look like? Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center is an example.

### *Youth Involvement in Learning*

**The Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center**

*Commissioned by the Rhode Island Department of Education and Board of Regents, The Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center (The Met) is a small, four-year state public high school open to all students in Rhode Island. Its design was implemented by The Big Picture, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to encourage and effect school change.*

*The Met "emphasizes personalized learning, authentic work, a strong sense of school community, and the involvement of families, the local community and area business." Each student's curriculum is determined by his/her interests, background and learning style. Under the guidance of teacher-advisors, students explore, identify and eventually pursue their interests in the real world. For this exploration, they use websites for research, access local resources, and plan and implement projects. They also take part in activities that help them understand their own strengths, shortcomings, talents and perspectives. Outside the classroom, students conduct informational interviews and participate in job shadowing days. These interest explorations culminate in internships in businesses, community-based organizations and government agencies in many fields, including entertainment and the arts, during which students develop one-on-one mentoring relationships with professional adults. Senior projects reflect the diverse interests of the student body: organizing a community Earth Day celebration; serving as translator at a pediatric clinic; planning, fundraising and documenting a cultural immersion trip to Canada; and programming a computer game for a science competition. Every student in The Met's first graduating class of 2000 was accepted to college.*

**Contact:**

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*(401) 456-0600*
*www.bigpicture.org*

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*(401) 277-5046*

or

*Peace Street Campus*
*362 Dexter Street*
*Providence, RI 02907*
*(401) 752-3400*
*www.metcenter.org*



Resource

***NYDIC: National Youth Development Information Center***

Youth development is about putting young people in the driver's seat with respect to learning, work and life. This approach recognizes that all young people can be successful if given support, guidance and opportunities appropriate for their individual stages of development. Check out the NYDIC website for information on research, program development, federal and state policy concerning youth, funding opportunities, and statistics that can help community groups make strong cases for the developmental needs of their young people. The website is www.nydic.org.



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## *Core Elements for Programs and Systems Serving Youth*

Public/Private Ventures has identified five core elements essential to support successful youth development. Although not every program needs to include all five elements, communities should have programs or services that provide:

1. Adult support and guidance;
2. Engaging activities during non-school hours;
3. A variety of work experience opportunities that connect what is learned in school to what is needed for successful employment;
4. Opportunities for young people to have a say in what they do and how it is done; and
5. Support for youth as they transition through key phases of life, such as middle school to high school, school to work, puberty, dating and parenting.

### Resources

***American Youth Policy Forum***

The American Youth Policy Forum offers free publications about policies and practices that contribute to the development of healthy and successful young people at www.aypf.org.

***JFF: Jobs for the Future***

JFF offers resources to organizations that help young people make successful transitions to employment. Their website also offers many publications, including one about how employers are involved in strengthening opportunities for youth to succeed in postsecondary learning and high-skill careers at www.jff.org.

### Resource

***PEPNet: A Resource for Developing Effective Programs***

The Promising and Effective Practices Network, PEPNet, gives examples of quality youth employment programs and a self-assessment process that can help programs make continuous improvement in their services. A tool for self-assessment is included in the PEPNet Criteria Workbook. PEPNet criteria for effective practices cover all aspects of running a youth employment program and include specific examples of strategies, techniques, methods and approaches used by PEPNet awardees: exemplary youth employment programs.

Community groups can refer to the interactive PEPNet website, www.nyec.org/pepnet, for ideas on how programs can improve services and what developers of new programs should consider to be effective. The information provided by the PEPNet website is realistic and specific. For example, if a community group is concerned about developing responsibility and leadership skills among local youth, PEPNet describes ways in which this is being done in over 20 Awardee programs.

PEPNet also offers information about the funding sources for the programs profiled. Along with the self-assessment, profiles and published information on effective practices, PEPNet sponsors the annual PEPNet Institute to enable youth-employment professionals, state and local policymakers, and employers to learn directly from the experiences of PEPNet's Awardees. PEPNet is a major project of the National Youth Employment Coalition (see page 28).

*PEPNet*
*National Youth Employment Coalition*
*1836 Jefferson Place, N.W.*
*Washington, DC 20036*
*(202) 669-1064*

Community groups seeking ideas to assess, improve and develop services for youth will want to refer to examples of successful programs. The Work Group's Youth Corps Program highlighted below is just one of the many programs recognized by PEPNet as exemplary. It is profiled on the PEPNet website.

## *"Hands-on" Learning*

Successful youth programs, such as the PEPNet Awardees, recognize that young people—especially those who have not done well in traditional, lecture-style classrooms—are often more engaged in "hands-on" learning activities. "Hands-on" learning can help youth gain both the employment-related skills necessary to perform job tasks and the academic knowledge necessary to train for higher-paying jobs.

highlight

### *Effective Programs*

**The Work Group's Youth Corps Program**

*The Work Group's Youth Corps Program was founded by 13 public and private agencies to serve unemployed high school dropouts between the ages of 16 and 25 in Camden County, New Jersey. Camden is among the poorest cities in the nation with a dropout rate between the first and twelfth grade of more than 75 percent. About one-third of The Work Group's corpsmembers have been involved with the criminal justice system; most receive some form of public assistance.*

*Serving approximately 140 young people each year, The Work Group's Youth Corps aims to address the young people's personal, social, civic, academic and vocational needs, and allows them to take the next step to career achievement. Enrolled full time for approximately eight months, corpsmembers participate in 15 hours weekly of basic skills instruction, 14 hours of paid community service, and four hours of career development and counseling. Youth then transition to college, training or employment, and receive another two years of case management and support services. The program offers 24 months of "Second Stage" services: check-ins on the first night of employment and regularly thereafter, 30-day employee/employer evaluations, alumni support meetings and activities, and an on-site career resource center and clothing closet stocked with business attire. A National Association of Service and Conservation Corps (NASCC) Corps-to-Career initiative and a federal welfare-to-work grant fund the extended services and pay for the career services specialist.*

*The Work Group works actively to secure long-term, stable, predictable funding. It avoids short-term special projects that overextend the staff and sap energy for achieving program goals. The Work Group has advocated for legislation to create a funding formula similar to the one used by Charter Schools (for more information on Charter Schools, see pages 49-50).*

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*lgodorov@theworkgroup.net*



## *School-to-Career Activities*

Many traditional and alternative schools provide activities and programs that link what students learn in the classroom to jobs and careers. With the help of employers, students explore what is required for various jobs through field trips, career fairs, interviewing and shadowing employees.

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Paid and unpaid work experiences, internships and apprenticeships also help young people learn about work. Some school-to-career efforts include in-school career academies that offer instruction organized around a particular industry or occupational theme, such as health, finance or media. Students enrolled in academies fulfill requirements for graduation and college entrance and acquire work-related skills.

School-to-career activities, career academies and other employment-related, hands-on learning experiences require the participation of local businesses. Community groups that include business owners—or employers with potential for helping young people learn about jobs—could become involved in school-to-career activities.

Resource

***Career Academy Support Network***

The Graduate School of Education at the University of California, Berkeley, has a clearinghouse of materials on career academies on their website. www.casn.berkeley.

## *Service Learning*

Service learning combines community service and classroom instruction. Through service learning, young people identify needs in the community, develop and implement action plans, assess the process, and celebrate their results. Teaching younger students, planting community gardens, building homes for low-income families, fundraising for nonprofit organizations and advocating for better transportation are examples of service learning projects. Service learning is "work" in the sense that young people take on responsibilities and perform tasks that build job-related skills and inform their career choices.

Resource

***Corporation for National and Community Service: Learn and Serve***

The website offers information and resources for schools and programs offering service learning opportunities. Locate information at www.learnandserve.org.



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## Work-Based Learning

Work-based learning is another strategy to enhance the skills of youth that occurs outside the traditional classroom. YouthBuild programs, highlighted below, combine classroom learning with work-based learning.

School-to-career efforts in both traditional schools and alternative programs, service learning, work-based learning and other "hands-on" youth development strategies can improve young people's chances of successful employment.

### Work-Based Learning
**YouthBuild USA**

*YouthBuild's stated purpose is "to unleash the positive energy of unemployed young adults to rebuild their communities and their own lives with a commitment to work, education, responsibility and family." Nationwide, 165 independent, community-based YouthBuild programs in 42 states and Washington, D.C., provide a year-long education and employment program for young people aged 16 to 24. Alternating a week in school with a week on the job, participants earn a high school diploma or GED and learn construction skills while building or rehabilitating housing for homeless or low-income people.*

*Youth receive supervision, instruction and hands-on experience that can prepare them for apprenticeships or entry-level jobs in the building trades. A large number of former YouthBuild participants go on to college, some through AmeriCorps education awards. In addition, YouthBuild provides leadership training and encourages young people to become involved in efforts to better their communities.*

*YouthBuild USA has major government contracts and foundation grants that are awarded to affiliated programs, but, ultimately, each local program is responsible for securing its own funding.*

***Contact:***

*YouthBuild USA*
*58 Day Street*
*P.O. Box 440322*
*Sommerville, MA 02144*
*(617) 623-9900*

*YouthBuild USA West Coast*
*Regional Office*
*1755 Broadway, Suite 504*
*Oakland, CA 94612*
*(510) 663-4600*

*www.youthbuild.org/learningnetwork*



## The GED



Many programs serving out-of-school young people offer preparation for the General Education Development (GED) examination. This series of five tests has recently been updated to incorporate the new skills that traditional high schools now require of their graduates. Since passing the GED leads to a high school credential, the 2002 Series GED now reflects these requirements. Community groups will want to make certain that local programs prepare young people for the updated tests.

Resource
***American Council on Education:***
***Center for Adult Learning and Educational Credentials***
Find information about the new series of GED tests at www.acenet.edu/calec/ged.



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## Gathering Information

*Follow these five steps to gather information about employment-related services for youth in your community.*

### Step 1: Define Your Community and Your Challenge

*Things to Consider: Is your community defined by neighborhoods, cultural backgrounds, ethnicity, language, professions or special interests? What specific challenges are you facing as you approach potential allies or opponents? (An example of a specific challenge might be that youth-serving programs can arrange subsidized summer employment for high school dropouts, but the same employers will not actually hire the youth full time.) Your challenge could change as information is gathered and knowledge surfaces.*

### Step 2: Decide Who Should be Involved

*Things to Consider: Involve many people and include those from diverse backgrounds. Include young people from the community, their parents and other interested community members. Make sure you involve those with connections to employers, schools and youth-serving organizations that keenly want to see young people successfully employed. Keep in mind that people currently preparing youth for employment may see inequities, welcome improvement, and could bring knowledge and experience to your effort. To generate good ideas and support, consider coordinating meetings among interested people and determine whether they want to organize smaller groups to research specific aspects of the challenge. Remember also that there may be those satisfied with the status quo who want to stop attempts to change. Know who they are and what challenges they present.*

### Step 3: Ask Key Questions

*Things to Consider: Stay on task by keeping your challenge and purpose in mind. Ask questions that get at the heart of your concern. It is likely that the questions you ask may change as you learn more, especially if concerned individuals are seeking information from different groups. Possible questions:*

*What information is already available to you? Don't reinvent the wheel. (For example, your local WIA agency might already know employers' concerns about hiring out-of-school youth from your community.) Use existing information as a starting point, but keep in mind that prior "mapping" may have missed new—or smaller—efforts. (For example, a church-sponsored program where members who are business people hire youth from the congregation, or a young entrepreneur who hires his classmates and could mentor others.)*

*Where are the potential jobs? For economic forecasts and business trends, talk with state, county and city economic development agencies. Examine the issue not just as an advocate for youth but as a realist about the local job market. Who are the employers who generally hire young people? Where are these companies located? If they are not nearby, can youth from your communities get to these jobs? Would they be comfortable working for these companies? Where can they get training for these jobs? Are these businesses and industries expected to grow, prosper and continue to offer opportunities? Are there ways for these jobs to become stepping stones to other career opportunities?*

*What programs, activities and other resources exist in your community that help young people prepare for jobs? In some areas, pamphlets or electronic guides to resources supporting youth employment are available. Look for these at One-Stops (career centers required by WIA) or at organizations that serve youth. Speak to the school superintendent, principals and the school board about ADA funding that supports youth employment. Contact members of the Workforce Investment Board for information on who is receiving WIA funding. Contact state or regional administrators about TANF program grantees. Visit programs that are funded.*

**tool: continued next page**

In order to bring about improvement, do you need to assess what youth employment-related programs or services exist or are missing in your community? If so, use the tool to the left, *Gathering Information.*

Resource

***U.S. Department of Labor: Employment and Training Administration***

The U.S. Department of Labor provides a 63-page guide for gathering local employment-related information titled *Assessing the Workforce Development Needs and Resources of Your Community: Conducting a Community Audit.* This could be particularly helpful to groups wanting to identify major industries, employers and future jobs. It can be downloaded as a PDF file at www.usworkforce.org/resources/audits.htm.

## Gathering Information (continued)

*How are youth exposed to careers and job opportunities? Examine how young people learn about careers in grades K-12. What if they drop out? Do they go to workplaces? Do they talk with employed people? Learn about options? Do they have the latest information about wages, working conditions and good jobs for the future? Is there effective counseling? For whom? For out-of-school youth? How do they learn about getting to work on time, working well with others and behaving appropriately on the job? Are there volunteer opportunities so young people, including those not attending school, learn about jobs and practice their skills? Where are they? Who gets them? Is occupational training available to out-of-school youth in your community? Is what they receive relevant? Do they have access to career counseling, skill and interest assessments? If out-of-school youth obtain employment, can they access mentoring or counseling support to help address issues that arise on the job? Do they have supportive supervisors?*

*Are programs currently funded by public monies preparing young people for successful employment? What performance data are available from the programs and what do they reveal—or fail to reveal? Ask the local WIA agency for performance data and evidence of participants obtaining jobs that are not subsidized. Look at the ways these programs build relevant employability skills of young people. How do they address special needs of those who have dropped out of school? Are subsidized work experiences quality ones—or are youth just reporting to the work site unsupervised with little chance to learn? Explore whether and how employers are involved in the youth employment program.*

### Step 4: Analyze Your Information

*Things to Consider. Capture as much information as you can and analyze it in an objective manner. Be prepared for both positive and negative surprises. Look for community strengths, expertise and interest in solving problems. Look for oversights, needs and neglect. Ask questions like these:*

- *Who is providing high-quality programs, or personal support, that prepare young people for employment?*
- *How do current educational programs incorporate new ideas to help youth prepare for careers and jobs that pay well? What kinds of relationships do programs have with employers?*
- *What are the opportunities for partnerships among programs?*
- *What needs are not being met?*
- *Who are the key decision-makers who could help make changes?*

### Step 5: Organize and Present Your Information

*Things to Consider: How your findings are organized and presented will vary depending on how you intend to use them. If you want employers to be aware of your efforts, data need to be presented quickly but thoroughly. An electronic presentation with key findings and graphics might work best. If you plan to use information to apply for funding, a written version will be necessary. For public presentations, slides, photographs and even videos are good ideas. And though your challenge might be as specific as the difficulties of out-of-school youth in obtaining successful employment, you will want to map out and present where the problems begin and where the gaps exist.*





Backed with knowledge of what effective youth employment programs do and what might be missing in the local community, groups can begin to answer the following questions:

- Who is receiving public funding, but not doing their job?
- Which schools and programs could be doing a better job?
- Who needs support? What type of support?
- What additions or changes need to take place?
- What type of funding is available to improve services and address gaps?



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## *Connect to Effective Youth Programming*

- Educate yourself about youth development principles that can help young people become successful adults.
- Decide whether there are effective, employment-related programs available to the young people in your community. What could make the current program offerings better? How accessible are people who run youth programs? How open are they to input from concerned community groups?
- Publicly recognize effective local programs and urge others to modify their services accordingly.
- Join forces with other groups that advocate and seek funding for effective programs. What needs to happen to trigger more effective, responsive programming? What is the best way to communicate your group's concerns?

The Los Angeles Metropolitan Churches offers an example of advocacy and action around issues of better education for young people in the community.

## *Community Organizing*

### *Los Angeles Metropolitan Churches*

*Founded in 1994, the Los Angeles Metropolitan Churches (LAM) is a network of 45 African-American congregations. LAM's mission is to build the capacity of clergy, lay and community leaders to revitalize their communities. Individual congregations conduct "listening campaigns" to develop a collective vision prior to uniting with other churches to achieve solutions to pressing problems. In a recent "listening campaign," a majority of LAM's members expressed concern about the state of their children's education. A strategy team was formed to begin researching the causes of the educational crisis. Based in part on the team's findings, LAM:*

- *Initiated a One Church One School "Adopt a School" Program that provides church members with a clear understanding of the level of educational attainment required by the end of each school year, and equips them to provide specialized tutorial and after-school programs for at-risk youth.*
- *Created Freedom Schools/Parent Centers in local churches that train parents to become informed supporters of their children's education.*

*In addition to One Church One School, LAM has campaigned to mandate that ex-offenders obtain a high school equivalency diploma as a condition of probation and parole. The measure passed the California Assembly, won the support of the Los Angeles district attorney and the support of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, which provides funding for a pilot GED preparation program that is offered at LAM member church sites. Although its purpose encompasses more than good jobs, the actions that the organization has taken to rally congregations around issues of education, to keep young people in school and to insist that non-graduating ex-offenders attain GEDs, all support increased employment opportunities for community members.*

***Contact:***
*Felicia Jones, Director of Programs*
*Los Angeles Metropolitan Churches*
*11100 South Western Avenue*
*Los Angeles, CA 90047*
*(323) 242-6770*
*feliciajones71@earthlink.net*

Supporting young people's successful transition to employment also means encouraging and allowing them to take an active role in planning, implementing and assessing the programs and services designed for them. In fact, your group might identify meaningful roles for young people—especially roles that develop leadership and the ability of young people to advocate for themselves. The following tools, *Involving Young People* and *Helping Young People Organize*, can be used to include youth in your efforts and to develop their organizing skills.

If young people in your community are already organized and advocating for themselves, your group may want to support their efforts. Or you may want to receive their input on actions that you can then take together to provide programs and services. The next page includes a tool to help young people organize.

## *Involving Young People*

*Use the list of questions below to help assess the opportunities for youth in various positions/roles in your group or in other youth-serving organizations. Start by setting aside preconceived ideas about what young people can or cannot do. Consider offering them the role of board member, organizer, spokesperson, grant writer, fundraiser, trainer or consultant. Think of the job in relation to its relevance, appropriateness and the opportunity it could offer a young person to develop skills.*

1. *Is this job a real job rather than a make-work or token position for youth?*
2. *Is this work of interest and does it have perceived value to a young person?*
3. *What type of person is needed to fill the position? An extrovert? An organizer? A planner?*
4. *Does the work offer opportunities for input and action based on a youth's perceptions and experiences?*
5. *What knowledge, skills and attitudes are required for success in the position?*
6. *Is the role flexible enough to allow modifications based on the individual young person's skills and interests or schedule?*
7. *Is adequate support and supervision available?*
8. *What training is necessary to prepare a young person for this work?*
9. *What satisfaction will the young person gain from doing the work?*
10. *How does the position lead to more challenging positions and how does the young person "advance" to these?*

Adapted from *TAP-Youth Service Resource Guide*
published by Michigan Community Service Commission

## Helping Young People Organize

*Begin by helping young people identify issues affecting their current and future employment. You might help "prime the pump and imagination" by suggesting that they ask themselves such questions as, "what concerns me most about getting a job? What keeps me from figuring out how I want to support myself/my family? What keeps me from having a career that would make me happy?"*

*Have the young people discuss the issues and determine their top concerns. For example, they might identify inadequate transportation to areas with better part-time, after-school jobs, or a lack of information and career counseling for those already out of school. Although not all young people will initially connect lack of employment opportunities with such barriers as poor basic skills, gang involvement or drug usage, allow them to make these discoveries during discussions among themselves and with employers, employment experts, and staff members of youth programs.*

*Facilitate, or better still, have a youth leader facilitate a group discussion about solutions, and then identify ones they believe they can implement. Offer information and advise them on whom they might contact or how they could go about finding the information they require. Encourage them to research what is already being done in other communities to address the problem and whom they can team up with to be effective.*

*Help the young people plan how to carry out a remedy for their concern. Then be supportive, but stand back and allow them to confront bureaucracy, experience frustration and have the pleasure of bringing about change that makes a difference.*

*Some things to keep in mind when helping young people organize:*

- *As part of becoming adults, even the most well-supported young people are dealing with multiple emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual issues. When encouraging them to become involved in community issues, be aware that they need to balance their individual needs and feelings and gain the confidence to negotiate outside their comfort zone. Helping them advocate for themselves might include practicing effective communication and conflict resolution and developing self-esteem.*

- *Another challenge for youth can be meshing or compromising individual concerns with the larger needs of the community. Taking neighborhood surveys; interviewing their peers, community members and business people; and researching laws and regulations can help them see the larger picture and understand how they fit in.*

- *Actions should be youth-driven. Challenge the young people to develop skills and become leaders. Allow them to decide what happens and how, to make their own mistakes and learn from them.*

- *Transportation is always a problem for young people. Minimize this by insisting that meetings and activities are scheduled at times when youth can attend and at places that they can easily get to.*

For everyone interested in improving the opportunities of young people, learning about effective practices and programs is an ongoing process. New strategies are developed and new programs test these strategies. The knowledge of what works accumulates, is modified and sometimes may prove not so effective after all. Then what? This section has provided background and is a starting point. The next three sections can help community groups take what they have learned so far and connect with three public funding sources that can support their goals: the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and State Education Assistance (ADA).





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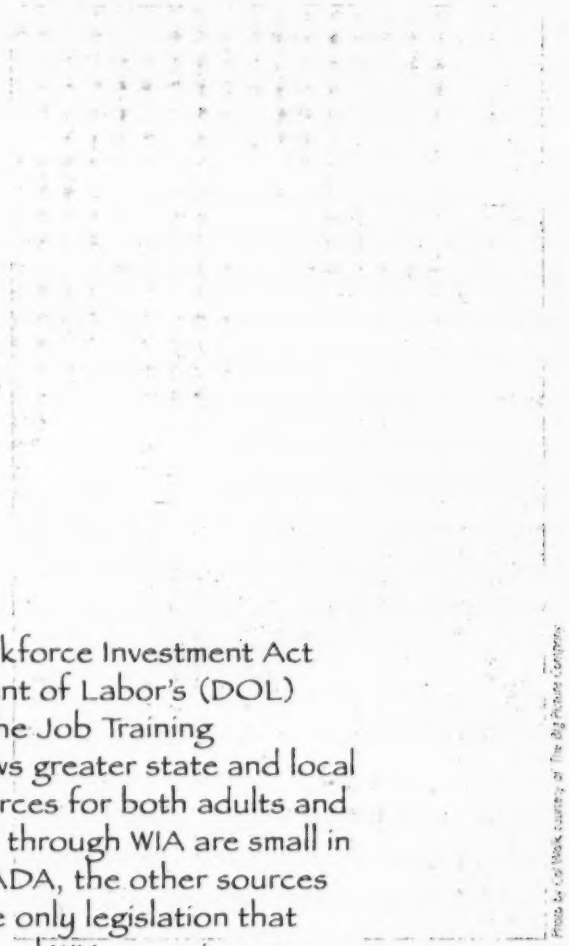
# The Workforce Investment Act

## WIA

## The Big Picture



Signed into law in 1998, the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) governs the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) job training funds. WIA replaces the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), and allows greater state and local decision-making to allocate resources for both adults and youth. Although funding amounts through WIA are small in comparison with both TANF and ADA, the other sources discussed in this *Guide*, WIA is the only legislation that focuses solely on employment. Local WIA agencies are required to set up systems of employment-related services for youth. They also encourage partnerships among youth-serving organizations and programs, including those that may receive funds from TANF and ADA. According to its own regulations, agencies administrating WIA must seek input on developing systems and programs for youth especially from local government and business leaders but also from the community. WIA can offer community groups a direct role in determining how employment and training funds for young people are spent.

Most community organizing groups will want to focus on local funding issues, initiatives and local program models. However, community groups should arm themselves with information about how WIA is funded, regulated and distributed at the federal and state levels, as well.





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## How WIA Funds are Distributed

Workforce Investment Act legislation allocates funds for youth employment in three main program areas: block grants, Job Corps and the Youth Opportunity Movement.

### Block Grants

Forty percent of WIA funds, or $1 billion, goes directly to the states and then to local areas. Each state receives one large block grant. Grant amounts are based in part on formulas that compare the number of unemployed and disadvantaged adults and youth among the states. States become eligible to apply for WIA block grants after DOL approves a state's unified plan. Included in the plans are strategies for how comprehensive services will be delivered to eligible youth throughout the state. In most cases, state Workforce Investment Boards distribute funds as reflected in state plans to local/regional WIA areas. Block grants are the most likely source of WIA funding to be of interest to community groups.

### Job Corps

A little more than 50 percent of WIA funds, or $1.25 billion, is earmarked for Job Corps, a long-time federal residential education and training program serving disadvantaged young people ages 16 to 24. Administered by DOL, Job Corps has been operating since 1964. About 80 percent of Job Corps students have dropped out of school, more than 40 percent come from families on public assistance and 70 percent are members of minority groups. Because the Job Corps program receives a large amount of federal WIA funding, which is not likely to change, most community groups would have little impact on the Job Corps program. Nevertheless, Job Corps is a good option for certain at-risk youth. Community groups should learn if a Job Corps exists in their community and whether it is effective.

**Resource**

***Job Corps***

To learn more about Job Corps, call (800) 733-JOBS or go to their website at www.jobcorps.org

### Youth Opportunity Movement

About 10 percent, or $250 million of WIA, has been set aside for the Youth Opportunity Movement, an initiative that has helped funnel needed resources to programs serving youth in high-poverty areas. These funds have been available to operate Youth Opportunity Centers and programs in Enterprise Zones or Rural Empowerment Zones, and in a few other high-poverty areas across the country. Although these allocations are not likely to continue, some of the project sites have used this money to seed youth programs that may be of interest to community groups.

**Resource**

***Youth Opportunity Movement***

Information about Youth Opportunity grantees is available through the U.S. Department of Labor at www.doleta.gov/youth_services/yog.asp.



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## Connect to WIA: Federal and State Levels

- Understand the purpose and intent of the legislation.
- Connect with national youth organizations tracking the use of WIA funds.
- Develop relationships with your Congressional representatives and their staffs so your group can educate them on local concerns and effectively lobby in the interest of youth in your community.
- Develop a feel for the political climate in order to "shape" how you might discuss your concerns and "position" solutions where funding is currently available.
- Know your state unified plan as it addresses youth training and employment. For information about WIA plans by state, go to www.wowonline.org/wia/intranet/home.htm
- Know how much WIA funding is available to your state. Who controls the distribution of WIA funds? How and to whom is it allocated? How much is potentially available to support youth in your community?
- Know who understands and represents the interests of your community at the state level.

Resource

***America's Workforce Network***

To learn more about the "big picture" of WIA, contact America's Workforce Network at www.usworkforce.org or call the toll-free help line at (877) US2-JOBS. Find further information on adult employment and training services at www.coleta.gov/programs/actrain.asp.

# WIA: In the Community

## Finding Local WIA Agencies

Local agencies distributing WIA funds go by many names, from Workforce Investment Boards to employment consortiums to Private Industry Councils. Throughout the country, a multitude of agencies and organizations administer state and local WIA funding. To identify and contact your state and local WIA agencies, do the following:

1. Go to the U.S. Department of Labor website at www.dol.gov/dol/location.htm;
2. Click on your state when a map of the USA comes up;
3. Click on Employment & Training Administration Information from the list of options; then
4. Click on WIA Service Delivery Areas/Sub-State Areas to find a list of agencies in your state with their directors, addresses and telephone numbers.

If there is no agency in your city, town or county, click on the agency nearest you to confirm whether it is the one serving your community. You can also get names and addresses for your WIA state contact and local Job Corps Centers and Youth Opportunity Grantees from the Employment and Training Administration Information list.

## Workforce Investment Boards

Community groups should understand that the WIA legislation requires the formation of state and local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) to provide the leadership, strategic planning, policy development and oversight of the WIA system. Federal and state criteria determine the overall composition of WIBs. Membership includes business, labor, education, representatives of community-based organizations and members representing each of the partners in local One-Stops (career centers required under WIA), along with elected officials. An important first step for groups interested in WIA funding is to learn as much as possible about state and local WIBs, how they operate and how well they are doing.

## Connect to WIA: Workforce Investment Boards

*Resource*
***National Association of Workforce Boards***
Unsure who is on your state or local WIB? Try the website for the National Association of Workforce Boards at www.nawb.org

- Know who is on your state and local WIBs. Are your local WIB members informed about youth employment issues in your community?
- Identify willing, potential members for WIBs. When seats are vacant, convince state and local officials to appoint WIB members who will take action to support employment-related programs for youth. Remember, a large number of WIB members are from business. If you intend to influence your local WIB, look for support in the business community.

## Youth Councils

WIA legislation also requires that WIBs establish Youth Councils as subgroups of local boards. According to WIA, Youth Councils have four primary duties:

1. Develop those portions of the local WIA plan relating to eligible youth;
2. Recommend and conduct oversight of eligible providers of youth activities;
3. Coordinate authorized youth activities; and
4. Other duties determined by the chairperson of the local board.

According to principles outlined by the U.S. Department of Labor, effective Youth Councils:

- Have a shared vision that reflects the community's needs and values, is briefly stated and easily understood.
- Foster and support programs that fuse youth development strategies with employment development strategies.
- Address the economic development needs of communities.
- Conduct community resource mapping to identify youth and employer services, needs, gaps and duplications.
- Create a strategic plan that identifies goals, tasks, responsibilities and a timeframe to address critical problem areas for youth.
- Broaden the role of the Council by working with the WIBs to advocate on behalf of youth, make funding decisions, leverage more resources for youth programming (especially for vulnerable youth), monitor and evaluate youth services, establish performance measures and standards, hold those who provide youth services accountable, and ensure that youth-serving staff have adequate training.
- Determine and meet the staffing needs of the Council.
- Expand Council membership to include employers and educators.

As Youth Councils are established, community groups may want to hold WIBs accountable by closely watching how Councils are formed and what they accomplish. Groups might monitor the Councils, making certain that positions are filled according to WIA regulations—including positions reserved for youth. As Councils structure and coordinate the local system to deliver employment-related services to youth, groups will want to make certain that the concerns of their communities are addressed. Because the authority to govern WIA funding lies in the WIB itself, and not the Youth Council, groups will want to also ensure that the WIB members appointed to the Council understand and support the healthy development of youth—including the most vulnerable young people. Depending on the WIB and local political leadership, representatives of community groups could lobby to serve on the Council themselves. The tool, *Impacting the Youth Council, on the next page* lists Youth Council positions and a "roster" to identify local members. Use it to plan how to bring your group's concerns to the attention of Council members.



**Resource**

***The Core Standards for Philadelphia Youth Programs*** are being developed by a wide range of public and private youth-serving programs and organizations, including the Philadelphia Workforce Development Board's Youth Council. All programs funded by the City of Philadelphia must work toward achieving these standards. The standards are used as self-assessment tools and benchmarks for continuous improvement. For information go to: www.pyninc.org/youthccouncil.

# Impacting the Youth Council

*Identify and record the names and backgrounds of Youth Council members and their knowledge of the concerns of your group. Then decide on ways in which you might best educate individual members and gain their support. Remember that the Youth Council does not have formal power to fund programs, but does plan and oversee the system that provides programs and services for youth.*

| Council Position | Member's Name | Profile of Member | Experience with Youth Issues | Strategy for Informing and/or Gaining Support |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Local WIA Board members who have special interest or expertise in youth policy, such as educators, employers and representatives of human service agencies. | **Example** Marty Washington | Mayor's asst / in charge of economic initiatives / former owner of a realty company / member City Club / served on school district budget committee / lives in W Biggs | On Board of Directors for Junior Achievement, organization encouraging young entrepreneurs | • Make appt to present survey/ statistics on youth interested in owning businesses<br>• Send Teresa Cobbs, grad from Ide Business College<br>• Make connection with business magnet program at Traverse HS and the City Club outreach to young entrepreneurs |
| Members who represent service agencies, such as juvenile justice and local law enforcement agencies. | | | | |
| Members who represent local public housing authorities. | | | | |
| Parents of youth eligible for assistance through WIA. | | | | |
| Individuals who represent organizations that have experience relating to youth activities. | | | | |
| Members who represent the Job Corps if a Job Corps center is located in the area. | | | | |
| Individuals whom the chair of the Local Board, in cooperation with the chief elected official, determines to be appropriate. | | | | |



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Community groups will also want to ensure that the perspectives of youth are encouraged and taken seriously. In Portland, Oregon, youth not only serve on the Council, but have their own advisory board where, with their peers, they can research, plan and implement activities related to their Council responsibilities.

## *WIA Youth Councils*

### *WIA Youth Advisory Board*
### *Portland, Oregon*

*In November 2000, youth members of the Youth Council of the Workforce Investment Board in Oregon's Region II (the Portland metropolitan area and a rural coastal county) presented an option that they felt better met their needs. As a result of this input and with the help of a Council work group, a 12-member Youth Advisory Board (YAB) of young people ages 14 to 24 was formed. On a rotating basis, five of these young people serve as representatives to and full-voting members of the Youth Council, providing a wider, more diverse perspective.*

*Charged with assessing needs, evaluating youth services and encouraging continuous improvement, the YAB began its duties by sponsoring a "secret shopper" activity. Young people visited local service providers presenting themselves as customers. Coupled with the results of a focus group on youth needs, the YAB then presented their "shopping" data to the Youth Council. This information will be compiled and used as feedback to programs and for future policy-making and RFP development. In addition, the young people are giving input on how the Council can support their advisory board. In order to increase participation by in-school youth, they suggested that some meetings be scheduled outside of school hours. To promote inclusiveness, equality and a professional attitude toward the YAB, they are requesting that adult Council members refer to them, not as "kids" but as "youth" or "young people." They are also asking that they be given ongoing information on how the YAB can best be of assistance to the Council.*

**Contact:**
*worksystems, inc.*
*711 S.W. Alder, Suite 200*
*Portland, OR 97205*
*(503) 478-7329*
**khenwood@worksystems.org**

## Resources

***U.S. Workforce***

To view a series of slides that outline the principles of WIA youth programs, how Councils are implemented, the structure and content of local youth plans, how services are to be contracted and delivered, along with other information on WIA requirements, go to www.usworkforce.org/training/youth. For further information, download *Recipes for Success: Youth Council Guide to Creating a Youth Development System Under WIA* at www.usworkforce.org/resources/youth.htm.

***NYATEP: New York Association of Training and Employment Professionals***

Also check out information and resources from the New York Association of Training and Employment Professionals. They offer a succinct summary of Dos and Don'ts to build active and engaged Youth Councils at www.nyatep.org/tenloryouthcouncils



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## Connect to WIA: Youth Councils

- Find out whether a Youth Council has been formed by your WIA agency. If not, why not? If so, how is your Youth Council structured? Who sits on the Council? Who runs the meetings and what happens at those meetings?
- Determine whether the Youth Council is truly focused on youth needs, including the needs of the most vulnerable youth. Are youth actively involved? Are adults paying attention to what they say? Does youth representation include those young people who are not necessarily "high achievers"? Do you need to advocate for more youth representation?
- Are the real issues faced by youth in your community being addressed?

## WIA Collaboration and Partnerships

The requirement for state unified plans, state and local WIBs, and coordination of youth employment programs through Youth Councils indicate that collaboration is expected in efforts to access WIA funding. This collaboration and partnership encourages pooling expertise and resources in order to support comprehensive statewide and local service systems. Organizations, agencies and programs receiving WIA monies are required to leverage other resources to support youth development activities. In the spirit of collaboration, WIA funding requires linking youth service providers in local communities.

In reality, achieving genuine partnership, collaboration and truly comprehensive programming is difficult. However, there are WIA-funded programs that purposively and successfully form partnerships and build systems. *San Diego Youth@Work*, highlighted on the next page, is one of these programs.

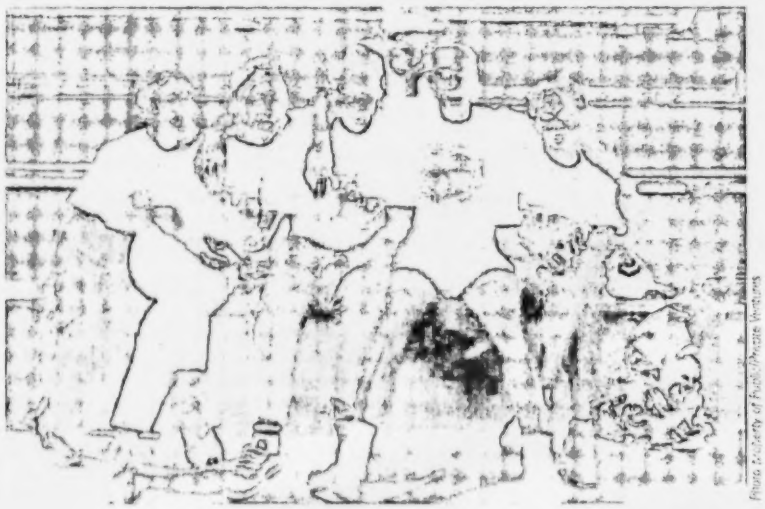

Photo courtesy of Public/Private Ventures



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## Partnerships
### San Diego Youth@Work

*The San Diego Youth@Work (SDY@W) is a broad-based collaborative that seeks to break down barriers and cycles of poverty among young people in the southeastern communities of San Diego. Funded through the Department of Labor's Youth Opportunities Grant, the SDY@W program intends to bring about life-long change not just job placements to youth ages 14 to 21 residing in this designated target area.*

*The initial design of the SDY@W initiative involved over 50 focus groups with local community organizations, businesses and community members. In addition, meetings were held with various community-based organizations, many of whom became partners. Community partners selected to be part of the grant had to have diverse expertise and skills for providing services to the target population and the ability to leverage significant resources. Planning and implementation requires the partnership to coordinate closely with the public school system (K-12 and postsecondary), local Job Corps, juvenile justice system, the private sector, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations and other existing programs providing services to youth.*

*SDY@W coordinates the efforts of 15 program partners offering these major services for youth: outreach, recruitment, and youth development; pre-placement, ranging from job readiness training to vocational training and other educational classes; placement, postsecondary education, vocational training and jobs; secondary education for both in-school and out-of-school youth; case management, using community coaches who begin their relationship with each young adult by developing an Individual Service Strategy that maps out current and future goals, and incorporates a holistic approach to meeting the individual needs; and, technology programs to address the "digital divide" at ten community technology learning centers within the program target area of San Diego.*

**Contact:**
*Margie Rosas, Program Director*
*Douglas Luffborough, Operations Coordinator*
*San Diego Youth @Work*
*4153 Market Street, Suite A*
*San Diego, CA 92101*
*(619) 266-5700*
*www.workforce.org/youthatwork*

*A program of the San Diego Workforce Partnership, Inc.*
*1551 Fourth Avenue, Suite 600*
*San Diego, CA 92101*
*(619) 238-1445 or (888) 884-7397*



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## *WIA's 10 Elements*

Along with requiring collaboration and partnerships to maximize resources, WIA provides the basic framework for local youth employment systems and programs. Drawing on lessons learned over the past few decades, WIA youth legislation emphasizes the following themes: preparation for and success in employment; improving educational achievement; support for youth; and developing the potential of youth as citizens and leaders. All these themes connect to the principles of youth development outlined in Section I of this *Guide*. Activities that support these themes are frequently referred to as WIA's 10 elements. The elements are:

1. Tutoring, study skills training and dropout-prevention strategies leading to completion of secondary school;
2. Alternative secondary school services;
3. Summer employment opportunities that are directly linked to year-long academic and occupational learning;
4. Paid and unpaid work experiences, including internships and job shadowing;
5. Occupational skills training;
6. Leadership development activities;
7. Supportive services;
8. Adult mentoring;
9. Comprehensive services; and
10. Follow-up guidance and counseling.

If these 10 elements are to be more than a list of requirements for receiving WIA funds, local WIBs and Youth Councils must appreciate the importance of the elements in developing the employment potential of young people. They must also understand how the elements fit together and what constitutes support and effective, quality programs. WIA legislation requires that programs receiving WIA funding must incorporate as many of these 10 elements as practical. They must evaluate services based on participants' attainment of basic skills, attainment of secondary school diplomas, and placement and retention in postsecondary school or the military. Connecting youth to employment is also an outcome of many WIA-funded programs.

Just as its predecessor JTPA, WIA funds programs that offer employment, mentoring, tutoring, dropout prevention, teen pregnancy prevention, drug counseling and other supportive services. Although the Los Angeles Conservation Corps, highlighted on the next page, receives major funding from sources other than WIA, it offers all 10 WIA elements to the young people in its community.

highlight

## Comprehensive Programs

### Los Angeles Conservation Corps

*In 1986, the dropout rate in some South Central and East Los Angeles schools exceeded 50 percent. There was high unemployment among the community's young people and a dismal lack of even rudimentary work skills that would allow them to enter the workforce, let alone maintain steady employment at living wages. In response to these issues and to pressing environmental concerns, community leaders, including Mickey Kantor, former U.S. Secretary of Commerce, founded the Los Angeles Conservation Corps (LACC).*

*The LACC is not a low-profile organization. Its newsletter is filled with the names and photographs of politicos—California Governor Gray Davis, former Vice President Al Gore and former Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan—and it generates press coverage and national recognition. Over its 15-year history, the LACC has developed a comprehensive program of education and employment-related training programs for young people.*

*The LACC promotes education and skill development for local youth, ages 18 to 23, through LEAP (LACC's Environmental Awareness Program). The 300 young people per year enrolled in LEAP alternate a week of paid training which includes planting trees, building trails, removing graffiti and recycling, with a week of active and engaged learning at Excelsior Charter School. Along with completing the academic requirements for a high school diploma or gaining the language, reading and math skills necessary to earn a GED, LEAP delivers a curriculum that helps corpsmembers connect what they learn in the classroom to what they do on the job. In addition, the young people identify job trends and career opportunities, develop resumes, learn interviewing skills, receive career counseling and understand what preparation is necessary for employment at living wages. Each year, more than $60,000 worth of scholarships provided through the Russell Kantor Fund go to LEAP graduates to further their education. Among other sources, funding comes through WIA and the California Department of Conservation and, for the Charter school, through State Education Assistance, ADA, funds.*

*Clean and Green is a LACC program for students of the Los Angeles Unified School District, ages 13 to 17. Students work and earn wages during their summer breaks and on Saturdays during the school year. In addition, members of Clean and Green take part in field studies of the local environment and earn high school credits for their participation. AmeriCorps members, former corpsmembers of LACC, assist team leaders in supervising and mentoring the young people. Aside from the federally funded AmeriCorps, major funding for Clean and Green comes from the City of Los Angeles.*

*Yet another LACC program funded with a grant from the City of Los Angeles through its Community Development Block Grant funds is the Early Childhood Development Center. Accredited by the California Department of Education, the newly renovated Center will provide child care for 60 children; 40 slots are for low-income community members who are working or enrolled in training programs. The remaining 20 slots are reserved for the children of young adult corpsmembers. All families participate in parenting classes and receive a variety of services, including referrals for medical and dental care. Child care for eligible families is paid through TANF grants.*

**Contact:**
*Los Angeles Conservation Corps*
*2824 South Main Street*
*Los Angeles, CA 90007*
*(213) 749-3601*

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## Resource

***NYEC: National Youth Employment Coalition***

NYEC is a network of 190 youth employment and development organizations "dedicated to promoting policies and initiatives that help youth succeed in becoming life-long learners, productive workers and self-sufficient citizens."

The information offered by NYEC can help community groups learn about youth employment relevant to WIA's 10 elements and ways to advocate for funds, training and quality programs for young people. NYEC publishes frequent updates on legislative hearings and youth-related bills, as well as reports on nationwide efforts to raise awareness of youth issues. Each year, its New Leaders Academy trains youth service staff members in best practices in youth employment and development.

NYEC also sponsors PEPNet, Promising and Effective Practices Network, which establishes criteria and offers information on effective practices and recognizes excellence in youth programs. In fall of 2002, NYEC will release a self-assesment tool for alternative education programs. See page 7 of this *Guide* for information on PEPNet Awardees.

*National Youth Employment Coalition*
*1836 Jefferson Place, N.W.*
*Washington, DC 20036*
*(202) 659-1064*
*www.nyec.org*

After consulting resources, such as NYEC, and considering the profiles of PEPNet Awardees, your group could examine whether appropriate employment-related services exist for young people in your community. Coupled with the tool, *Gathering Information* found on pages 11-12, the following tool, *WIA's 10 Elements: Making Them Work*, can help you assess whether local programs using WIA funds are effective, which additional programs might qualify for funding through WIA or whether your own efforts are fundable.

## *WIA's 10 Elements: Making Them Work*

| Does this element exist and is it easily accessible to youth in your community? | Who is providing this? Are they receiving WIA funding? | How well is this being done? (Consider both current and past track records.) | What needs to improve and how could this take place? | 10 Elements of a Comprehensive Youth Program |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | *Tutoring, study skills training, instruction and dropout prevention strategies leading to completion of secondary school—GED preparation; English language learners' tutoring; tutoring in reading, writing and math skills; and test-taking workshops.* |
| | | | | *Alternative secondary school services—Collaboration with public schools alternative programs.* |
| | | | | *Summer employment opportunities that are directly linked to year-long academic and occupational learning—Continuation and application of skills learned, such as a horticultural student working in a nursery. Paid and unpaid work experiences, including internships and job shadowing—relationships with local businesses and organizations, such as coffee shops, restaurants, animal protective agencies, veterinarians, so that youth have opportunities to practice skills.* |
| | | | | *Occupational skills training—Engaging youth, especially dropouts and others who feel disenfranchised and need help connecting to jobs. Involves supportive short-term employment where young people earn income and find adult role models. Increases lifetime employability and earnings. Involves relationships with local trade unions and businesses to help young people transition to steady employment and careers.* |
| | | | | *Leadership development activities, which may include community service and peer-centered education that encourage responsibility and other positive social behaviors during non-school hours—Opportunities to display leadership, for example, as a group facilitator (position could be rotated); teacher's aide; academic peer tutor; assistant recreation leader; crew leader for community garden; or newsletter editor.* |
| | | | | *Supportive services—Activities, such as driver's education; health and wellness; child care; gender-specific counseling; substance abuse services; and other services appropriate to the needs of the population served. Agency also may network and develop collaborative relationships with organizations that already provide needed services.* |
| | | | | *Adult mentoring—A separate mentoring program that recruits elders and/or local professionals, or a program that intentionally builds in mentoring as part of a community service or employment opportunity.* |
| | | | | *Comprehensive services—Services that address the holistic needs of youth. Usually includes networking with community agencies and businesses that best provide a particular service.* |
| | | | | *Follow-up guidance and counseling—Plans that include regular consultations with youth to enable them to successfully transition into their communities, and appropriate referrals to other community agencies.* |



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### Connect to WIA: The 10 Elements

- Take stock of the WIA-funded programs in your local community. Are programs addressing all 10 elements for youth? Are there gaps in services?
- Identify your group's role in ensuring that youth in your community have access to all 10 elements. What resources and expertise can you bring to the system? Can you fill the gaps in service? How might you advocate for funding elements not readily available to youth?

## Receiving or Monitoring WIA Funding

Distribution of WIA funds varies from state to state, but usually once state funds are allocated, community-based organizations, schools and private organizations compete for WIA funds through a RFP (Request for Proposal) process administered by local WIA agencies.

### RFPs: The Request for Proposal Process

RFPs typically outline the services to be provided and then require applicants to complete a form describing how their program/project would address workforce needs and how they would deliver services. RFPs also require organizations to document their qualifications, identify their partners, project outcomes (for example, how many young people will participate), explain how outcomes will be evaluated (for example, how many youth will earn their GED or Food Handler's Certification, or pass a licensing test) and provide a budget. WIA agencies usually provide clarification and technical help with the process. Check the local WIA agency website for notification and deadlines of RFPs.

Not every community group can meet the requirements to apply directly for WIA funding—or will want to do so. If your group does want to be involved in providing direct services to youth, it may be possible to partner with a program receiving WIA funds by contracting or through a "memorandum of understanding." In other words, funds may be available to support your goals or services without going through the WIA application process. Also, groups should keep in mind that becoming a service provider themselves could limit their ability to serve on a WIB or Youth Council, effectively monitor the system or demand that programs meet the needs of youth in their communities.

Perhaps your group wants to review performance outcomes of youth programs receiving WIA funding (some regional WIA boards provide this information online). Take into account that numbers can be deceptive. Programs that historically receive funding may be able to document their "positive" outcomes, but in reality fail to serve youth who are most in need. If necessary, groups should be prepared to ask relevant questions and bring shortcomings to the WIA agency's or WIB's attention.

### Connect to WIA: Local Funding

- Know what organization distributes WIA funds in your community. How much funding is available locally? Who makes decisions about how the local funds will be spent? When are RFPs due?
- Know who is eligible to receive funding through WIA for youth programs. What type of track record is necessary? What performance measures are required? Who reviews RFPs? Could your group successfully compete for a contract?
- Identify which programs routinely receive funding. How much funding do they get annually? How successful are these funded programs? Who benefits from their services? What are they accomplishing?
- Partner with and advocate for organizations/programs with whom you share concerns about what is needed. Or develop programs for youth whose needs are not being met and apply for funding yourself.

## WIA: Meeting the Challenges

In a sense, WIA with its emphasis on input, collaboration and the 10 elements provides the ammunition that community groups can use to advocate for services for young people. With this in mind, the starting point for groups might be whether state and local WIA funding is used as the legislation intends. If WIA regulations are carried out, communities should be developing a comprehensive education and employment-related system that reflects the principles of youth development (see Section 1 of this *Guide*). This system should receive oversight from Youth Councils composed of members informed about local youth issues, and knowledgeable about what constitutes youth development and effective programs. Support for youth should be built on partnerships that can, potentially, make effective use of public funds for all young people.

### The Challenges

WIA funding offers opportunities to enhance or create new programs and community collaborations, but the legislation presents challenges:

- ***Lack of Resources.*** WIA funding has not increased the resources available to youth programs. Without greater public demand, funding for Youth Opportunity Grants will more than likely disappear.
- ***Lack of Information.*** Understanding and incorporating youth development principles into programs and services may be difficult for many community groups, in part, because they have not identified examples of successful programs.

- ***Inefficient Planning and Coordination.*** Creating a truly comprehensive program that serves all youth takes much planning, coordination and agreement about how to incorporate the 10 elements into systems.

- ***Limited Employment Opportunities.*** Summer jobs programs were cut when year-round and summer employment and training funds were combined; many youth might profit from subsidized summer jobs, but do not necessarily need to be tied into year-round programming.

- ***Youth Issues Receive a Low Priority.*** Few Youth Councils have been established and there are fewer exemplary models.

- ***Reluctance to Change.*** Political agendas and bureaucratic turf continue to beset WIA with many of the same problems under previous legislation. Organizations, agencies and programs are often entrenched in "old thinking." The inability to meet new challenges and reluctance to change remain the largest barriers.

## What Community Groups Can Do

In order to affect or access WIA funding, community groups and youth advocates need to familiarize themselves with the WIA legislation, and then insist that it be fairly implemented in ways that support young people. To be sure that the local WIA agency and programs understand and respond to local needs, groups could expect positive responses to the following questions:

- Do the members of local WIBs, which are appointed by politicians and include many business leaders, really understand youth issues, especially the issues surrounding the most vulnerable young people: homeless youth, teen parents, out-of-school youth, immigrant youth, gang-affected young people, youth living in impoverished communities, those unemployed or working at low-wage jobs?

- Is there a Youth Council? Do its members understand the elements of youth development and implement strategies that result in effective programs, activities and services?

- Does the local system provide programs relevant and accessible to all young people?

Along with asking the questions above, community groups could take the following actions:

- Insist on youth services in your local community that encourage partnerships to leverage resources and expertise.

- Advocate for the creation of an effective local Youth Council. Make certain that the youth, parents and employers from your community are represented. Prepare youth in your community to be actively involved.

- Work on building partnerships with the "little guys" as well as the "big hitters." Keep your mission and objectives focused on youth needs and outcomes. Remind partners of the purpose of WIA, its 10 key elements, youth development principles and the value of collaboration.
- Don't back down when faced with resistance from systems and entrenched organizations that have been slow to change. Offer proof that change needs to take place and demonstrate how your group can help make that happen.
- Be alert for changes in legislation, regulations or how policies are enforced that could be detrimental to the employment-related interests of youth. Check the website of CLASP (see page 36) and NYEC (see page 28).

If community groups are knowledgeable about WIA, they can begin acting on behalf of local young people by demanding that their local WIA agency, boards, councils and programs do what the legislation has promised. In addition, they can offer feedback, input, viable options and fundable additions to the system and programs that benefit youth in their communities.

# Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

## TANF

## The Picture

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is a federal block grant created by the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. The TANF program replaces the former Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) Training programs. TANF dramatically transformed the nation's open-ended welfare entitlement program by requiring work in exchange for time-limited assistance.

Photo by Lia Holk courtesy of The Big Picture Company

**Resource**

***American Public Human Services Association***

Congress must reauthorize TANF funding periodically. To keep up with changes in TANF policies affecting youth education and employment services, you might take a look at The American Public Human Services Association. For information on TANF, go to www.apnsa.org

### TANF Goals

Federal legislation says that states can use TANF funds in any way that pursues one or more of the following goals:

- To help needy families so that children can be cared for in their homes or in the homes of relatives;
- To end dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting work and marriage;
- To reduce out-of-wedlock pregnancies; and
- To encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.





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## Connect to TANF: Federal Level

- Get the concerns, issues and needs of youth in your community to your Congressional representatives. Are federal TANF policies working for youth or against them?
- Team with other organizations nationwide with similar agendas for securing TANF funding to support youth education and employment.

> **Resource**
> ***CLASP: Center for Law and Social Policy***
> To find information on using TANF dollars to support youth education and employment, go to www.clasp.org. CLASP published *Tapping TANF for Youth: When and How Welfare Funds Can Support Youth Development, Education and Employment Initiatives.*

## How TANF Funds are Distributed

Although reauthorization may change how funds are allocated, currently the amount of federal TANF dollars states may receive is based on the original federal funding received under AFDC in a prior year—typically 1994. To receive the full amount of federal funds, states must spend 75 to 80 percent of state tax funds that were spent in 1994 on welfare and related programs to maintain eligibility for TANF funds from the federal government. The state portion is called Maintenance-of-Effort (MOE) funds.

Both TANF and MOE resources can be used to fund youth employment programs to accomplish the goals listed on the previous page. Program services supported by TANF or MOE funds need only be reasonably calculated to meet at least one of the four TANF goals. For example, programs that improve the motivation, performance and self-esteem of youth would be expected to reduce school dropout and teen pregnancy rates and therefore qualify for TANF funding.

> **Resource**
> ***NGA: National Governors' Association Center for Best Practices***
> The NGA newsletter, *Front and Center*, is online at www.nga.org/center. It contains articles on federal legislation and policies, including TANF and WIA. This site also offers information and resources on innovative education policies, workforce development and social services, as these often concern youth.



## Connect to TANF: State Level

- Know the state policies that regulate TANF funds. How are the funds awarded?
- Know how TANF funds can be used in your state. What is TANF being spent on? How much is directed to youth programs?
- Know who understands and represents the interests of your community at the state level.
- Connect with other advocacy groups in the state that reflect your interest in TANF and youth employment training.

Resources

***Welfare Information Network***
Check the organization's website at www.welfareinfo.org/tanf.htm for information on state TANF plans.

***NCSL: National Conference of State Legislatures***
A NCSL task force looks at TANF issues in order to make policy recommendations. Go to www.ncsl.org.

***Coalition on Human Needs***
The Coalition offers a forum to discuss, strategize and collaborate on issues related to TANF funding. Go to www.chn.org.

***LINC Project: Low Income Networking and Communications***
LINC monitors changes in welfare legislation and facilitates community organizing around welfare and other issues of interest to low income people. Go to www.lincproject.org.

## TANF: In the Community

Because TANF funds may be distributed in diverse ways in different states, community groups interested in accessing TANF dollars for employment-related youth programs will need to research their state's regulations and policies on how these are applied at the local level.

### Who is Eligible

It is important for community groups to understand who is eligible for TANF. Eligible families are those with a dependent child that meet the income/resource standards set out in the state TANF plan. Some states have income eligibility requirements for TANF-funded services at levels as high as 250 percent of poverty, including services for out-of-school-youth. For this reason, it is critical to review your state plan and TANF eligibility requirements. Higher eligibility levels make it possible to support a broader group of young people using TANF funds.

Welfare caseloads have been falling nationwide for the past several years. As a result, states are electing not to obligate their total TANF grant amount. States may hold on to these dollars as "unobligated" or "unliquidated" funds, making them "rainy day" resources not used to address immediate needs. Community organizations need to make certain their states are not holding back TANF funds when there is a clear need for services for vulnerable youth.

### Assistance or Non-assistance

Benefits or services funded through TANF are either "assistance" or "non-assistance." When TANF dollars are used to support "assistance" (cash payments, vouchers and other services or benefits intended to meet ongoing basic needs), then certain regulations and restrictions apply, including a five-year time limit. Any young person receiving "assistance" is considered a welfare recipient and subject to welfare requirements. However, support services not intended to meet ongoing basic needs—such as counseling, education, job training and case management—are not considered "assistance."

For community groups interested in TANF funding for employment-related youth programs, understanding the importance between "assistance" and "non-assistance" cannot be overstated. Young adults receiving "non-assistance" services, even though supported with TANF funding, are not subject to welfare restrictions. Furthermore, receiving "non-assistance" services will not affect an individual's future eligibility for welfare grants and services. Job training and summer employment fall under services that "non-assistance" TANF dollars can support.

TANF regulations and policies can allow the use of funds to support youth while they are in education or employment training programs.

## How TANF Funds Could be Used for Youth Education and Employment

Supporting youth services with non-assistance dollars allows organizations to bring essential education, counseling and training to at-risk and vulnerable youth. The following youth services meet the TANF regulations and, in most cases, could be supported through TANF funds without counting against five-year time limits:

- After-school and summer programs;
- Summer youth employment;
- Teen parenting programs;
- Teen pregnancy prevention;
- Tutoring and mentoring for at-risk youth; and
- Youth development programs.

Using TANF funds, the Illinois Teen REACH Program, highlighted below, provides after-school activities, including those that build employment skills for eligible young people. These activities are aligned with TANF goals.

highlight

### Using TANF for Youth
**Illinois Teen REACH Program**

*Illinois is using $18.5 million in TANF and MOE funds to support Teen REACH (Teen Responsibility, Education, Achievement, Caring and Hope). The Teen REACH Program targets young people ages 6 to 17 from families who live in high-need communities, including families who will soon leave the welfare system.*

*The goal of the program is to provide alternatives to high-risk behaviors through structured activities during out-of-school time. Elements of the program include academic enrichment, recreation, sports, mentoring, life skills learning, community service activities and employment skills training.*

*Contracts for start-ups and operations are granted to a range of providers, including school districts, Boys & Girls Clubs, and other community providers. The program is in its fourth year, with more than 84 contractors and 240 program sites statewide.*

**Contact:**
*Teen REACH*
*Department of Human Services*
*623 East Washington Street, First Floor*
*Springfield, IL 62701*
*(217) 558-2674*
*dhshpa14@dhs.state.il.us*



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Resource

***The Finance Project***

The Finance Project develops and disseminates information, tools and technical assistance to support decision-making around children, families and communities. It is currently developing technical assistance resources on financing out-of-school time programs and community school initiatives. Go to www.financeproject.org.

## Connect to TANF: Local Funding

- Know your welfare agency leadership. Are they sensitive to the needs of at-risk and vulnerable youth who are eligible to participate in TANF-funded programs?
- Inventory existing services and identify gaps. How good are officials at distributing TANF funds? Are there big surpluses? Why?
- Because WIA legislation mandates a year-round effort, TANF funds can be an important source to fund summer employment programs. If needed, are summer employment programs being supported locally for your youth?
- Business organizations are also taking an interest in TANF, its impact on youth and how reauthorization and income assistance programs will affect employers. Do you know the local business leaders who support employment-related youth education?
- Find out which programs in your community receive TANF funding. Are they supporting youth education and employment? Are they quality programs? What opportunities exist for partnering, collaborating and/or subcontracting?

# TANF: Meeting the Challenges

Because TANF must be reauthorized periodically, spending levels can always change. A decision by Congress to maintain TANF funds at needed levels may depend, in part, on the outcomes states and local areas achieve with the funds they now have.

## The Challenges

Barriers that might prevent organizations from effectively using TANF funds include:

- ***Lack of Information.*** Many community organizations are not aware of TANF or how to access its funds to support youth employment.
- ***Strict Eligibility.*** States and localities may be focused only on "assistance" benefits, thereby maintaining strict eligibility requirements.
- ***Lack of Foresight.*** Many states haven't considered using TANF for employment-related programs that could help prevent future reliance on welfare.
- ***Poor Training for TANF Agencies/Staff.*** Welfare agencies and front-line staff who interpret and communicate policy may not be knowledgeable regarding the use of TANF funds.
- ***Stigma of Welfare.*** TANF funds often carry a stigma associated with welfare, and many agencies and organizations may avoid TANF support.

## What Community Groups Can Do

To meet the challenges, community organizers should consider the following actions:

- Arm yourself with information on current TANF policy, funding and programs, and how TANF dollars can be and are being used to support youth employment services.
- Know how youth programs can use TANF funds effectively. Use examples of successful services and programs to demonstrate to local TANF officials how funds can be used to assist youth in your community.
- Advocate for spending TANF dollars for youth programs that will help young people develop employment-related skills so they will not need future welfare assistance. Show how these types of programs directly address the goals of TANF.
- Involve families receiving TANF assistance in your efforts.
- Find out if your state has passed or is considering legislation that would make TANF funding less restrictive for youth employment services.
- Find out if your state allows TANF funds to be spent for low-income individuals (for example, families at 200 percent of poverty), a policy that could allow increased services to more youth.
- Know whom to lobby and where. Many states have devolved welfare policy and spending to county governments or local welfare reform boards. If you have a proposal for the use of TANF funds, know where to take that proposal.
- Connect with other organizations that are also developing proposals for the use of TANF funds. Look at ways you can make stronger proposals through partnering.

TANF sets forth policies, regulations and funding designed to move families off welfare and into sustainable employment. States and local governments have flexibility not only in the use of welfare dollars but in directing those resources to youth. Community groups can advocate for how TANF dollars are being spent.

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# State Education Assistance

## ADA

## The Big Picture

Federal, state and local funding for education totals more than $275 billion annually—10 times the funding available under TANF and more than 100 times the total funding available for youth under WIA. Although these other two funding sources support programs and services most directly connected to employment, state education assistance pays for the public schools where 9 out of 10 of the nation's young people begin their education. State education assistance funding is of prime interest to groups wanting to improve the economic future of youth. In fact, while most state funding is used to educate young people in traditional schools, communities around the country can draw on state education assistance funds to create alternative learning environments for young people, especially high-risk or out-of-school youth.

Photo by Gil Mills. Courtesy of The Big Picture Company





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## How State Education Assistance is Distributed

Although the distribution of state education assistance differs from state to state, in general it is distributed to school districts in two ways:

1. As general funds on a per-pupil basis, and
2. As specific funds to support special programs or facilities, such as charter schools.

States use an average daily attendance (ADA) formula for the computation of general state funding for public schools. The definition of average daily attendance and the formula for calculating how much money school districts, schools and programs receive varies from state to state and even locality to locality. Typically, local school districts receive their state education funding based on the number of students enrolled for the current year. A predetermined date is often established for counting the number of enrolled students, such as the first school day in October. The state then holds on to any money unclaimed by schools for enrolled students. It is unclear in many states whether their legislatures intend these funds to support the education of youth or simply bolster states' budgets for other uses.

## Connect to ADA: State Funding

- Know how your state funds local school districts. Is an ADA formula similar to the one described above used? What happens with surplus dollars when student enrollments are down? Who is getting those surplus dollars? What is state government doing with the money?
- Know how your state administers funds for young people who are not enrolled in traditional schools. How can ADA funds be used for alternative programs for "dropouts"?

### Resources

***NCEF: National Center for Education Finance***

NCEF serves as a clearinghouse for information about school finance. Learn more about alternative education funding at www.ncsl.org/programs/educ/NCEF.htm.

***NCES: National Center for Education Statistics***

The NCES recently released the *Public School Finance Programs of the United States and Canada: 1998-99*, in which you can compare your state's public school finance system with others. Go to www.nces.ed.gov/edfin/state_finance/StateFinancing.asp.



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## *ADA: In the Community*

The flexibility with which state education assistance funding can be used varies greatly. In Oregon, Washington and Minnesota, for example, the state portion of the ADA allotment can pay for students to attend postsecondary schools, such as community colleges. Other states only use funds to pay for students pursuing high school diplomas. In most states, ADA funds are used for alternative education programs, some with innovative curricula for high-risk youth. In general, communities use state ADA dollars for two types of alternative school initiatives:

- Alternative schools tied to their local school district; and
- Public charter schools that may be freestanding or operate under the jurisdiction of a local district, depending on state legislation.

## *Connect to ADA: Local Funding*

- Know the local alternative schools and charter schools in your community. Do they provide learning environments that support young people? Are the programs accessible to those students most in need? Are staff trained to work with vulnerable youth? Are programs being held accountable for student success? Is the instruction relevant and does it connect young people to the world of work? Are students simply being warehoused in these programs or are the programs dynamic centers where young people can learn, acquire skills, plan and prepare themselves for the future?
- Connect with your local school district administration. Find out who supervises alternative schools and charter schools. Get copies of regulations and policies governing these programs so that you are aware of the challenges and options.
- Learn when meetings are held to discuss these programs. Find out who evaluates programs and when.

## *Zero Tolerance Policies*

School disciplinary policies, often referred to as "zero tolerance policies," are increasingly popular. In many cases, students are expelled without any other educational options. Schools also have increased the involvement of the police and juvenile justice system in the disciplinary process. It is important to examine the implementation of zero tolerance policies in your state and city. If young people are suspended or expelled, it is essential that they still have quality educational alternatives. Here are resources that can help:



Resources

**Applied Research Center Erase Initiative**, www.arc.org/erase.

**Building Blocks for Youth** www.buildingblocksforyouth.org.

**Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice**, www.cjcj.org.

**Hamilton Fish Institute**, www.hamfish.org.

**Harvard Civil Rights Project—Zero Tolerance Action Kit**, www.law.harvard.edu/civilrights.

**Justice Matters Institute**, www.justicematters.org.

**Juvenile Law Center**, www.jlc.org.

**Advancement Project**, www.advancementproject.org.



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## Alternative Schools

Because most decisions about how state education monies are spent are usually left to individual school districts, alternative schools or programs are created through contracts with the local districts in order to be reimbursed by the state. (It is not uncommon for the school district to claim a percentage of these alternative education dollars for administrative efforts.) Because many alternative schools provide education to youth who have not succeeded in traditional high school settings, alternative education programs can be found in community-based centers, faith-based programs, community colleges and other public locations. Programs may elect to target special groups, such as adjudicated juveniles, teen parents or homeless youth. Typically, alternative education programs provide a learning environment that supports completion of a high school diploma, an alternative high school diploma or a GED. Life skills instruction (learning about responsibility, decision- making and money management, for example) is often an integral component of the curricula. In recent years, many of these programs have partnered with local employers and job training programs in order to offer school-to-career education and training.

For school districts and programs to continue to receive funding, many are urging their state legislators not to "count" students as "dropouts" when they leave a traditional school setting to enroll in an alternative school. Both school districts and alternative schools maintain that these young people should be counted as enrolled—and their education funded through ADA monies. The fact is that young people enrolled in an alternative education setting are making an effort to continue their education to secure better opportunities for employment or further training.

## Connect to ADA: Alternative Schools

- Visit the alternative schools serving young people in your area. Get to know the administration and the staff. Talk with the students. Does the program have the facilities and equipment to offer quality education? Are young people being challenged? Are staff motivated and skilled in working with high-risk and vulnerable youth?
- Find out if local businesses and trade unions support the alternative schools.
- Talk with alternative school administrators about how you can help.

From a national perspective, ADA represents one of the largest and most underutilized resources for supporting out-of-school youth. One reason is the difficulty in delivering services to young people once they disengage from the public school system. PathNet, highlighted on the following page, represents a way to connect young people to education, training and employment.



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## CREATING A SYSTEM

### PathNet

*In 1999, a group of western Washington educational and community leaders came together to explore ways to deal with growing numbers of unemployed, out-of-school youth. The establishment of PathNet was a response to many needs and issues affecting Washington's youth: a 25 to 30 percent dropout rate; the high number of unemployed or underemployed young people; the lack of training and skills among the young; and a highly competitive, high-tech workplace. Additionally, a great many of these young people struggled with personal issues, such as unplanned pregnancies, abandonment, abuse, incarceration, gangs and drugs. The group recognized the urgency to create a system whereby young people who have dropped out of public school are retrieved and guided back to a pathway of education and career-employment training. They did not create a new program, but focused on coordinating current services for youth aged 16 to 21 who did not intend to return to a public high school. By building a network of partners who eliminate barriers, turf and competition among youth service providers, PathNet seeks to make services that re-engage young people more accessible.*

*Presently, PathNet involves more than 80 community organizations and agencies from school districts and community colleges to faith-based communities. Partners include Bellevue Community College, Boys & Girls Club of Seattle, Center for Career Alternatives, Department of Social and Health Services, Jewish Family Services, Refugee Women's Alliance, Seattle Indian Center and Shoreline Community College. PathNet assists programs in generating ADA revenue, special education funds, and vocational and barrier reduction funds through the retrieval and re-engagement of out-of-school youth. Historically, these funds have been available but were either unused or underutilized.*

*Career Education Options (CEO) is one of the programs within the PathNet system that delivers education and employment training to dropouts. Located at Washington's Shoreline Community College and Bellevue Community College, the CEO program is designed to give young people the chance to return to school, complete their secondary education, obtain career training and improve their future employment opportunities. Because state education funds are redirected to support the youth in this program, CEO is able to provide many services and benefits without cost to the student, such as tuition, fees and books, one-on-one assessment, career exploration, education and technical training, and even entry-level internships.*

*Many young people who have enrolled in community colleges in the past have been no more successful than they were in high school, often dropping out within weeks of enrollment. Recognizing the need for support services, the CEO program requires newly enrolled youth to participate in a program orientation. Orientation sessions allow young people to tour the college campus, learn about all the services provided through CEO, understand what a college learning environment expects, and hear more about professional/technical programs and employment services.*

*One goal of the CEO program is to have young students fully acclimate to the college system. To accomplish this, CEO supports youth as they enroll and participate in both precollege and college-level classes, and provides specialized courses and services to help young people succeed. These courses and services include discovering personal strengths, developing fundamental computer skills, educational planning, career exploration and planning, critical thinking, test-taking and study skills, time management, and life skills.*

***Contact:***
*PathNet*
*Special Services*
*Puget Sound Educational Service District*
*400 S.W. 152nd Street*
*Burien, WA 98166*
*(206) 439-6916*
*www.psesd.wednet.edu*



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## *Schools Sponsored by Community-Based Organizations*

Schools sponsored by community-based organizations (CBO schools) are not new. Some have been offering educational options to young people—often those who have dropped out of traditional schools—for more than 30 years. The purposes of CBO schools vary as widely as the organizations' missions. Community groups may want to consider supporting existing schools or encouraging community-based organizations with educational expertise to establish a local school that supports youth development and employment.

The following highlight describes a school that acknowledges the cultural interests and needs of its students as it offers curricula aimed at helping students prepare for careers in specific industries or professional fields.

### *CBO SCHOOLS*

***American Indian Opportunities Industrialization Center***

***Career Immersion High School***

*American Indian Opportunities Industrialization Center (AIOIC) Career Immersion High School is a contract alternative diploma program of the Minneapolis Public Schools. AIOIC provides educational and career opportunities to formerly out-of-school American Indian young people, ages 15 to 21. The curricula feature a range of projects aligned with the Minnesota graduation standards and SCANS employability standards. Projects frequently incorporate community involvement, technology skills and issues pertaining to American Indians. The student-to-staff ratio of 15 to 1 allows individualized attention.*

*AIOIC's school-to-career program includes health, business, engineering/manufacturing and information technology. The program connects students to paid and credit-bearing employment or community service opportunities. Through AIOIC's health pathway, students train to become certified nursing assistants as part of a partnership with a local university and local hospitals. The postsecondary enrollment option also allows students to attend college courses and earn college credit while working toward their high school diplomas. In addition, students have access to AIOIC's GED preparation courses, business and office technology training, child-care facility, and a variety of social services that can support their continued education.*

***Contact:***
*AIOIC*
*1845 East Franklin Avenue*
*Minneapolis, MN 55404*
*(612) 341-3358*
*peern@aioic.org*
*gregh@aioic.org*
*www.aioic.org*

### Resource

*CBO Schools Profiles in Transformational Education* is a booklet that outlines how schools run by community-based organizations have successfully re-engaged young people in high school education. It includes profiles of 11 schools and can be obtained from an Academy for Educational Development's website at www.transformationaleducation.com/resources.



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## Charter Schools

A charter school is a public school exempted from many traditional rules and regulations. This exemption allows greater flexibility to try different instructional approaches. Like all public schools, charter schools are nonsectarian and must be fair, open and accessible to all students. In some cases, lotteries are used to select students if the number of applicants exceeds available space.

The design of the charter school is left to each school to define; it might be an existing school, a school within a school or specific classrooms at a particular site. The charter petition should be clear about the educational program, types of instruction and student population that make up the charter school. Obviously, not all charter schools connect young people to employment but they could be designed to do so.

Unlike alternative education programs funded through ADA, charter schools may receive special start-up funds. Take a look at Champion Charter School of Brockton, highlighted on the following page, to see how the school is innovative in its programming and in finding additional operating resources.

### Resources

**Charter Friends** connects and supports state-level charter school activities and offers a list of contacts in 43 states and the District of Columbia. It's a starting point to find out about local charter schools, issues and resources. Go to www.charterfriends.org.

The **U.S. Charter Schools'** website is another place to find information on charter schools and their formation. Download *How Community-Based Organizations Can Start Charter Schools*, a 76-page document at www.uscharterschools.org/.

## Connect to ADA: Charter Schools

- Find out if there are charter schools serving young people in your neighborhood.
- Get to know the partners who make up the oversight committee for the charter school. Are there community members in that group? Are there members of the business community?
- Learn about the outcomes of local charter schools. Are they effectively serving youth? What changes, if any, are needed?

## Charter Schools

### Champion Charter School of Brockton

*The Champion Charter School is a high school specifically designed for out-of-school youth. The school is based on the Diploma Plus program that emphasizes a school-to-career approach to teach life and employment-related skills along with developing peer support. The approach includes project-based learning, cross-discipline curricula and strong connections between learning in the classroom and learning at the work site. The school offers structured work-based experiences that are integrated with career themes and classroom instruction.*

*Because the Champion Charter School offers project-based curriculum and assessment of competencies, students do not receive grades. Instead, they obtain a regular high school diploma based on a demonstration of their skills, not classroom "seat time." The Champion Charter School is for mature students committed to rigorous learning.*

*Although it is part of the Brockton Public Schools and has been approved by the Brockton School Committee and the Brockton Education Association, the Champion Charter School is operated and managed by a board of trustees independent of the Brockton School Committee and comprised of volunteers from the community.*

**Contact:**
*Champion Charter School of Brockton*
*One Centre Street, 4th Floor*
*Brockton, MA 02301*
*(508) 894-4377*
***http://www.brocktonpublicschools.com/schools/charter/index.html***

### My Turn, Inc.

*The Champion Charter School also receives support from My Turn, Inc., a private, nonprofit corporation whose staff and services provide high school students with the emotional support, knowledge, skills and self-esteem necessary to be successful and productive citizens. My Turn, Inc. launched its first "school-to-work" program for high school seniors in 1984, and has steadily added programs to Brockton and other communities. It offers five programs:*

- *School to Work develops partnerships with local business and community leaders to provide career-oriented employment opportunities and support to high school seniors.*
- *STEP (School Training and Education Preparation) assists high school seniors, primarily students of color, who are the first in their families to attend college.*
- *RISE (Recognizing Individual Success and Excellence) focuses on academically at-risk students and promotes student's personal growth and educational success.*
- *HERO (Higher Education Readiness Opportunities) offers career exploration, college preparatory and mentoring activities to Brockton High School sophomores and juniors.*
- *Connections for Youth prepares young people for learning, citizenship and successful careers.*

**Contact:**
*My Turn, Inc.*
*43 Crescent Street*
*Brockton, MA 02301*
*(508) 580-7543*
*www.my-turn.org*



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## State Education Assistance: Meeting the Challenges

Often legislators, school administrators and community leaders fail to recognize the value of alternative and charter schools for young people. At their best, these schools represent some of the clearest thinking about addressing the needs of young people, especially those at risk. At the same time, community groups should keep in mind that alternative and charter schools are not foolproof solutions and can fail to offer the services that effectively prepare young people for careers and good jobs.

### The Challenges

Here are some barriers that community groups and organizations might face when trying to support or establish an alternative school or charter school:

- ***Lack of Support from State Officials and School Administrators.*** State legislators may be reluctant to support programs about which they understand little. Educators, too, may not fully understand or agree with the intent of alternative education. And, subsequently, they may not regard alternative education as highly as traditional education.
- ***Misinformation about the Use of State and Local Tax Dollars.*** In general, the public often thinks that tax money is being taken away from local schools in order to support alternative education programs.
- ***Failure to Provide Clear Regulations and Authority.*** State regulations vary regarding the use of ADA funding and policies governing contracts between public school districts and alternative and charter schools. This information, including who has administrative authority over alternative education programs, may not be easily accessible to community organizing groups.
- ***Alternative Schools May Be Perceived as Substandard.*** Many programs have struggled to convince school districts and state officials of their effectiveness.
- ***Fear that Alternative Education Programs Repeat the Same Old Failures.*** Critics of alternative education contend that programs do not do any better than the traditional school system and do not provide innovative programs geared to the needs of high-risk and vulnerable youth. They fear that limited funding for public education will be further burdened.
- ***Lack of Start-up Funds and the Reimbursement Process.*** In many states or districts, ADA monies cannot be used to begin new educational initiatives. In addition, ADA funds are generally "reimbursed" on a quarterly or even annual basis. This delays payments for services provided. Many programs need timely funding to operate.
- ***Lack of Knowledge of Successful Models.*** Organizations that want to provide alternative education to young people often don't know where to learn about successful programs.

- ***Potential Increase in the Dropout Rate.*** Re-enrolling youth in alternative schools may inflate dropout rates, depending on state education board and school district policies. In many states, students attending alternative education programs are still counted as "dropouts," even though these young people are re-enrolled in school district-supported programs and may be making progress.
- ***The Number of Charter Schools Is Allowed by State Legislation.*** There is no uniformity from state to state regarding how many charter schools may operate. California allows the formation of 100 new charter schools each year. In contrast, the state legislature in Kansas limits the total number of charter schools to 15.
- ***Not All Charter Schools Are Effective.*** Even though charter schools offer communities opportunities to develop innovative alternatives for youth, many charter schools have not been successful. In fact, there is controversy in some communities because they are not performing well.

**Resource**

*Setting High Academic Standards in Alternative Education* can be downloaded at the National Governers' Association Center for Best Practices website at www.nga.org/center.

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## What Community Groups Can Do

To meet these challenges, community groups should consider the following actions:

- Learn how alternative education programs are financed, authorized and regulated in your state and school district so you can speak about them knowledgably.
- Insist that your state legislators support access to education for all youth in the community. Make certain that legislation reflects multiple approaches, options and partners. Educate decision-makers about local alternative education programs and let them know you expect their support for these programs.
- Find out who supervises alternative education programs in your district and at the state level. Attend school district meetings and get the needs of youth in your community on the agenda.
- Visit alternative schools in your state and elsewhere. Find out what is working well. Make sure alternative education programs serving young people where you live are effective, quality programs.
- Don't settle for the "the pie is too small" argument. Education is compulsory and states, schools districts, schools and communities have an obligation to provide every young person with a quality education. The fact that a district has a 30 percent dropout rate should translate into directing educational dollars to serve that 30 percent.
- Encourage alternative education programs to explore additional options for funding services to youth. Consider how WIA, TANF and other resources can be utilized to bring an effective, coordinated system of youth employment services to your community.
- Correct, if needed, how dropouts are counted. Insist on accurate counting practices. Remember that many states still count GED earners as dropouts when, in fact, these individuals have often moved on to postsecondary education and/or jobs. Students who are actively engaged in education at a district-supported alternative education program should not be considered as "dropouts." They are, in fact, part of the school system and need to be fully supported as such.
- Some alternative schools or programs use private funding sources until district funds become available. When appropriate, get businesses to commit to initial start-up support. Also look to labor and trade unions for support dollars.



**Resource**

***Center for Community Change***

The Center's Education Project works with grassroots organizations and parent leaders to help them move their local educational initiatives into public policy. The organization also offers information on TANF funding on its website at www.communitychange.org/.



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Because state education assistance is meant to educate all young people, community groups should look at whether public monies are being used to educate young people in their communities. Groups seeking to help young people complete their education and prepare for high-paying jobs have many potential partners. For example, community colleges are looking for ways to partner with school districts, deliver professional/technical training and serve as conduits to higher education. Local school districts are seeking ways to make business and labor more active partners. Many communities have alternative schools, and school teachers, staff, parents and community leaders are experimenting with charter schools as another approach to create relevant educational programs for young people. Furthermore, community groups, are looking closely at how ADA funds can be used in conjunction with WIA, TANF and other public and private support to help prepare young people for successful adulthood.



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# The Big Picture

## Putting It All Together

Knowledge is powerful. Community groups who know that young people can benefit from assistance during major transitions in their lives can advocate for programs that provide this support. Groups who know what helps get young people employed can go to school administrators or program managers or the people who decide which programs get funded and insist that appropriate work-related experiences are available. Groups who have educated themselves can point to model programs in other communities and encourage the schools and other publicly funded organizations to explore alternatives if existing programs are not working well for local youth.

Understanding that WIA, TANF and state education monies can be used to support programs, services and alternative education for young people who are not being well served by a traditional education is also powerful knowledge. Knowledgeable community groups can insist that agencies, organizations and schools provide the services that they are mandated by law to provide and that these services are quality ones. They can encourage successful—or promising—local organizations and programs to apply for funds and encourage funding agencies to support these programs.

Concerned community groups will recognize that guidance and education is key for the success of young people. Education is also key for community groups. This *Guide* can be used as a starting point, a primer, for a group's own education. Groups can then apply this information—and gain additional knowledge through the resources offered in this *Guide*—to foster successful youth employment programs in their communities.

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# Additional Resources

## Printed Materials

Here is a list of workbooks, curricula and other printed materials that can be helpful to groups advocating for effective employment-related programs for young people.

Baker, A. et al. (1996). *Connections: Linking Work and Learning.* A series of eight booklets designed to help structure and document work-based learning. Topics include employer recruitment and orientation, job shadowing for students and staff, career exploration, workplace initiatives, and survival skills. Available from Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, (800) 547-6339.

Benally, S., J.J. Mock, and M. Odell (eds.) (1996). *Pathways to the Multicultural Community: Leadership, Belonging, and Involvement.* Essays written by educators and students. Methods for building and sustaining strong, high-quality and diverse educational institutions are discussed. The book takes a hard look at the complex issues facing real people in a multicultural society. Available from Western Interstate Commission for High Education, (303) 541-0290.

Checkoway, B., K. Pothukuchi, and R. Purnell (1992). *Training Materials for Community Youth Programs.* A comprehensive guide and annotated bibliography of training materials and practical tools for people organizing and planning community youth programs. Available from the School of Social Work, University of Michigan.

Dorfman, D. (1998). *Mapping Community Assets Workbook.* Guides the user through a method for determining the assets of one's community in preparation for community development. Available from Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, (800) 547-6339 or download from www.nwrel.org/ruraled/Mapping.pdf.

Public/Private Ventures (2000). *Youth Development: Issues, Challenges and Directions.* A compendium featuring chapters on the history of youth development and challenges of using the approach in workforce development, juvenile justice and other settings. Includes a chapter on youth employment. Available from P/PV at (215) 557-4465 or download from www.ppv.org.

Public/Private Ventures (1998). *WorkPlus.* A curriculum for young workers and their supervisors that can help young people identify and gain skills from entry-level jobs. Available from P/PV at (215) 557-4465. Review sample lessons www.ppv.org.

Eyler, D.E.G., Jr., and A. Schmiede (1996). *A Practitioner's Guide to Reflection in Service Learning.* Provides an array of step-by-step reflection activities that help young people think critically about their community service experiences. Available from the National Service Learning Clearinghouse at www.servicelearning.org/library/.

## Printed Materials *continued*

Lewis, B.A. (1995). *The Kid's Guide to Service Initiatives: Over 500 Service Ideas for Young People Who Want to Make a Difference.* Written for young people. Available from Freespirit Publishing, Minneapolis, Minnesota, (800) 735-7323.

Pines, M., (ed.) (n.d.). *Making Connections: Youth Program Strategies for a Generation of Change.* Offers descriptions and analyses of program strategies that work for out-of-school youth. Available from Sar Levitan Center for Social Policy Studies, Johns Hopkins University, (410) 516-7169 or online at www.levitan.org/publications.html.

Sar Levitan Center for Social Policy Studies (n.d.). *A Generation of Challenge: Pathways to Success for Urban Youth.* Describes the obstacles and experiences of out-of-school, unemployed young people and the programs that might help them become successful. Available from Sar Levitan Center for Social Policy Studies, Johns Hopkins University, (410) 516-7169 or online at www.levitan.org/publications.html.

Sar Levitan Center for Social Policy Studies (n.d.). *WIA Youth Policy Councils: Key to the Future for a Generation of Challenge.* Discusses legislation, offers case studies and proposes strategies for forming Youth Councils under the Workforce Investment Act. Available from Sar Levitan Center for Social Policy Studies, Johns Hopkins University, (410) 516-7169 or online at www.levitan.org/publications.html.

Smith, S. and J. Thomases (2001). *CBO Schools' Profiles in Transformational Education.* Booklet outlines how schools administered by community-based organizations have successfully re-engaged young people in high school education. Profiles 11 schools. Available from the Academy for Educational Development, (202) 884-8267 or download from the website at www.aed.org.

Steinber, A. (1998). *Real Learning, Real Work: School-to-Work as High School Reform.* Examines the pitfalls and promises of using school-to-work programs to transform American high schools. Includes design principles for initiatives and stories from the field. Available from Routledge, (212) 216-7800 or at www.routledge.com.



Winter, M., and K. Ray (1994). *Collaboration Handbook: Creating, Sustaining, and Enjoying the Journey.* A practical guide that brings together diverse interests and gives concrete steps for collaborating. Includes worksheets to guide and document the process. Available from Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, (800) 274-6024 or online at www.wilder.org/pubs/@Collaboration.

Yohalem, N., and K. Pittman (2001). *Powerful Pathways: Framing Options and Opportunities for Vulnerable Youth.* A 50-page booklet that offers strategies for helping the nation's most vulnerable youth prepare to fully participate in the workplace, higher education and the political process. Can be downloaded at www.forumforyouthinvestment.org

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## Organizations

These organizations offer timely information, advice, resources and examples that can help groups support and provide effective youth employment opportunities in their communities.

***Activism 2000 Project.*** Encourages youth to speak up about issues they care about. Offers books, videos, training and consulting about youth participation in decision-making at all levels of organizations and in the community, as well as free materials, initiative ideas and technical assistance to young people on how to take action. www.youthactivism.com.

***Afterschool.gov.*** Provides links to federal resources that support children and youth during out-of-school hours, including how to get money for running after-school programs. www.afterschool.gov.

***American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF).*** A non-partisan development organization that provides learning opportunities for policymakers working at the state, local and national levels. Published *Some Things DO Make a Difference for Youth: A Compendium for Evaluations of Youth Programs and Practices*, which can be ordered from the website at www.aypf.org.

***Building Blocks for Youth.*** Conducts research, advocates for minority youth and analyzes decision-making in the juvenile justice system. Website includes information on the adverse effects of the zero tolerance policies of schools: www buildingblocksforyouth.org.

***Building Bridges.*** Provides resources for educators and nonprofit organizations that can help them work more effectively together. Website includes a searchable list of initiative profiles and additional resources. www.centerpointinstitute.org/bridges/.

***Center for Community Change.*** The Center's Education Project works with grassroots organizations and parent leaders to help them move their local educational initiatives into public policy. The organization also offers information on TANF funding at its website. www.communitychange.org.

***Center for Law and Education.*** At the forefront of school reform, with the goal to improve educational outcomes for all students, especially those from low-income schools. Lots of practical research publications available for download. www.cleweb.org.



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## Organizations *continued*

***Center for Youth as Resources.*** Provides small grants to youth and supports them as they design and implement issue-related initiatives. Previous participants (including young people) offer training and technical assistance. www.yar.org.

***Center for Youth Development and Policy Research.*** Established by the Academy for Educational Development, the Center offers information on youth development and publications about how communities can promote positive youth development for their young people. Access the Center and the National Training Institute for Community Youth Work through www.aed.org.

***Child Trends, Inc.*** Conducts research and evaluation studies on teenage pregnancy and childbearing, the effects of welfare and poverty on children, and issues related to parenting, family structure and family processes. Child Trends also provides technical assistance to public agencies and private organizations that develop, analyze and track indicators of the well being of children. www.childtrends.org.

***Corporation for National and Community Service.*** Federal agency that works with state governments and community organizations to provide opportunities for Americans of all ages to serve their communities through AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve, and the National Senior Corps program. www.learnandserve.org.

***Do Something.*** Encourages youth and educators to get involved in community issues. Website provides free curricular resources, information on how to access their mini-grants and other strategies to "do something" meaningful in the community. www.dosomething.org.

***Education Trust.*** Offers educational information, especially about how to close gaps in the achievement patterns of different groups of students. Data are specific to states and local areas. www.edtrust.org.

***Forum for Youth Investment.*** Offers a series of downloadable publications on youth development and community building, some with implications for youth employment. www.forumforyouthinvestment.org.

## Organizations *continued*

***Harvard School of Law.*** Conducts research and offers resources on education issues, including high-stakes testing, special education and zero tolerance policies in schools, especially as these relate to racial profiling and the civil rights of students. www.law.harvard.edu/groups/civilrights/publications/.

***InitiativeMaker.*** Provides free software for download that can help groups plan community service initiatives that address the specific needs of young people, help meet educational benchmarks and utilize technology. www.kn.pacbell.com.

***Jewish Fund for Justice.*** Assists community-based organizations to support programs that promote self-sufficiency, including helping young people to organize and develop leaderships skills. www.jfjustice.org.

***Jobs for the Future.*** Offers an alphabetical listing of links related to workforce development and education reform. Provides information on programs and their track records and publications. www.jff.org.

***LISTEN, Local Initiative Support Training and Education Network.*** Researches youth culture, policy issues and trends affecting urban youth, and facilitates youth-led community building and community organizing. www.lisn.org.

***Listen Up! Network.*** Provides a forum for youth workers and publishes *The Groovy Little Youth Media Sourcebook*, a resource for approaches and strategies for teaching youth to share experiences and learn through the media. www.pbs.org/merrow/trt.

***National Center for Strategic Nonprofit Planning and Community Leadership.*** The NPCL offers expertise in building and running a small to medium-sized nonprofit organization, including helping community-based organizations and public agencies to better serve young, low-income single fathers and fragile families. www.npcl.org.

***National Center on Education, Disability and Juvenile Justice.*** Provides a free bimonthly online newsletter featuring information related to educating youth with disabilities in juvenile correction facilities. www.edjj.org.



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## Organizations *continued*

***National Clearinghouse on Families and Youth.*** Provides resources on youth development. www.ncfy.com.

***National Clearinghouse for Youth Development Practitioner Apprenticeship.*** Promotes youth development training among youth workers in the employment and training field. www.levitan.org/ydpa.

***National 4-H Council, At the Table.*** Advances the "youth in governance" movement on a national level. Maintains a database of organizations that have youth board members and resources related to youth in governance. www.fourhcouncil.edu.

***National Governors' Association Center for Best Practices.*** The NGA online newsletter, *Front and Center*, contains articles on federal legislation and policies, including TANF and WIA, that affect states. This site also offers information and resources on innovative education policies, workforce development and social services, often as these concern youth. www.nga.org/center.

***National Youth Development Information Center.*** Provides low- or no-cost information on youth development, including evaluation, research, funding opportunities, policy issues, statistics, examples of community youth development initiatives and related publications. Website has links to youth websites. www.nydic.org.

***National Youth Employment Coalition (NYEC).*** Operates PEPNet, the Promising and Effective Practices Network that identifies and promotes strategies for youth employment programs. Website includes profiles of organizations that have successfully met the PEPNet criteria, articles and publications, and a comprehensive self-assessment tool for youth-employment programs. www.nyec.org/pepnet.

***National Youth Summit.*** Highlights youth-adult partnerships that improve the lives of young people. Website offers the publication *Principles for Authentic Youth Involvement*. www.nationalyouthsummit.org.

***Points of Light Foundation.*** Promotes volunteerism. Website provides service learning resources for community-based organizations and volunteer centers. www.pointsoflight.org



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## Organizations continued

**Public/Private Ventures.** Seeks to build, implement and evaluate practical approaches and policies related to social issues that affect youth and young adults. P/PV also has initiatives to support youth through faith-based organizations, and the volunteer and service sectors. www.ppv.org

**The Search Institute.** Advances the well being of adolescents and children. Website offers information on asset building in youth. Also contains research, evaluation, publications and practical tools for supporting youth. www.searchinstitute.org.

**Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS).** Website contains a complete listing of the SCANS competencies—skills young people need to succeed in the world of work. wdr.doleta.gov/SCANS.

**U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration.** Website contains timely information on DOL funding. A summer youth programs site has a pilot test for measuring academic enrichment activities, a casebook of private sector summer youth employment and a summer employment resource guide. Links to Job Corps and Youth Opportunity websites. wdsc.doleta.gov.

**Youth Development and Education.** A part of the quasi-public Commonwealth Corporation in Massachusetts that deals with issues of workforce development. Website offers resources on Diploma Plus, the Reaching All Youth Coalition and the youth components of WIA. www.commcorp.org/CYDE/DP

**Youth in Action Network.** Website for youth who want to be active in their communities. Contains a youth forum, action alerts, surveys, petitions, government information, calendar of events and an opinion page. www.mightymedia.com/act.

**Youth on Board.** Seeks to revolutionize the role of young people in society by changing attitudes, preparing young people to be leaders and decision-makers, and ensuring that public policy values young people in the community. Offers technical assistance, training, publications and links to other organizations. www.youthonboard.org

**Youthlink.** Provides a forum for young people to discuss issues and network with one another. Offers a resource database. www.youthlink.org.



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